REVOLUTION
and
COUNTER-REVOLUTION IN CHINA

M.N. ROY

1986

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PREFACE

This book was written as far back as in 1930. It was published in German in the following year. Before the arrangement for the publication of the English edition was complete, I left Europe for India. Soon afterwards, I was arrested and spent six years in prison. Upon my release at the end of 1936, I received pressing requests from different quarters to arrange for the publication of the English edition, because the development of events in China, in the meantime, had added importance to the book. But the preoccupations of an active political life prevented me from devoting the necessary time and attention to the matter. During the years of imprisonment, a part of the manuscript had been lost. The rest was scattered in several places. I had to collect the parts and complete the manuscript by translating several chapters from the German text. For all these reasons, the book could not be published as soon as generally desired and as I myself wished.

Ever since 1922, I had been closely connected with the political movement in China. I contributed to the formulation of the policy of the Communists joining the Kuo Min Tang with the purpose of promoting the cause of the outstanding bourgeois democratic revolution. Later on, in application, the policy degenerated into opportunist deviations. When, at the end of J 925, the Kuo Min Tang leaders openly began the preparation for the eventual betrayal of the revolution, the Communist Party of China and those directing its policy on the spot failed to press for a bold approach to the social problems on the pretext of maintaining the unity anti-imperialist front. It was on my initiative that the Communist International directed a correct application of the policy of developing the bourgeois democratic revolution in the teeth of the opposition of the bourgeoisie, if necessary. I went to China at the end of 1926 as the representative of the Communist International. I was there until the middle of 1927, that is, throughout the great crisis of the Chinese Revolution. A brief account of that period has already been published in "My Experience in China". The same story is told in greater

detail in the closing chapters of this book. Upon my return to Moscow, all the documents (stenographic reports of the proceedings of the Fifth Congress of the Communist Party of China, of all the meetings of its Central Committee during the period of my stay in China, etc) were published in a book called "These Chinese Revolution". It was published in Russian by the State Publishing Department. The closing chapters of this book are based on those official documents. My first book. "The Chinese Revolution", was never published in other languages. On request from Moscow, I sent the manuscript back from Berlin.

Many things happened in China since this book had been written. A new volume must be written to deal with those events extensively. As those events have borne out my contention about the collapse of 1927, and have corroborated my views about the inevitable lines of development of the Chinese Revolution, I did not wish to add anything to this book, so that its character as a historical document is in no way affected. Nevertheless, a history of the Chinese Revolution appearing today would be incomplete if it did not touch the events during the period since this book was written. Moreover, the lessons of the experience made in China during those eventful years are not only of great theoretical value, but are also of practical importance for us in India. Therefore, I have added the last two chapters covering those events briefly.

The book, however, is more than a history of the revolutionary movement in contemporary China. It gives the broad outlines of the social history of China from the earliest days. A number of social problems, which appear to be typically Chinese, are theoretically treated. In doing so, I had to make some investigations into the causes of what is generally known as civilisation. The investigations have enabled me to make some original theoretical contribution to the science of the history. Personally, I consider that to be the real merit of the work. I have not yet had the time to follow up the investigation in greater detail. Unfortunately, an active political worker is debarred from such purely scientific work. 1 hope that my suggestions will stimulate others to undertake the greater work which I may not be able to do.

* * * *

The publication of the book was again delayed by the outbreak

of the war. Apart from the difficulty of making proper printing arrangement and the high cost of paper, there were other, more serious, considerations. Nationalist China became one of the United Nations in the war; Chiang Kai-shek was boosted as one of the top leaders of the anti-Axis alliance. This book narrates the record of both, and it is not at all a complimentary record. Its publication might create diplomatic difficulties; it might even be prescribed as prejudicial to war efforts. I could not send it out to a publisher abroad without submitting the manuscript to the censorship of the official expert on Chinese affairs, and he was entitled to suppress it if he found it objectionable. I did not take the almost sure risk.

Eventually, the Chinese bubble burst, as it was bound to. Foreign journalists began to tell truths about nationalist China and its hero, instead of the previous flowery fictions. There was no longer any political reason to hold up the publication of this book, which predicted sixteeen years ago exactly what has been happening ever since in nationalist as well as the so-called Communist China.

Even now, I do not wish to add anything to the book, nor do the subsequent events warrant any revision of the views expressed in 1930, and than in 1939, when the last two chapters were added. I have only recorded in a short epilogue some facts about the present developments in China which drive home the lesson set forth in the last chapter.

Dehradun
March, 31st, 1946. M. N. ROY

INTRODUCTION
To the Author

M.N Roy was in many ways a unique person. He distinguished himself both as a man of action and as a man of thought. As a man of action, he was a devoted and dedicated revolutionary. As a man of thought, he developed into a profound and original social philosopher. He passed through three phases of political life. He started as an ardent nationalist, became an equally ardent Communist and ended as a creatively active Radical Humanist. He built up and propounded the philosophy of Radical Humanism which may well become one of the most relevant philosophies of the future.

M.N. Roy was born on 21st March, 1887 in Brahmin family in a village in West Bengal. His original name was Narendranath Bhattacharya. He started taking part in underground revolutionary activity from the age of 14. He was involved in a number of political offences and conspiracy cases. Under the leadership of Jatin Mukherjee, he and his colleagues had prepared a plan for a armed insurrection for the overthrow of British rule. When the first World War commenced, a promise was secured from certain German agents for the supply of arms to Indian revolutionaries. In 1915, Roy went to Java in search of arms from the Germans. That plan having failed, he went a second time to Java for the same purpose. Thereafter he moved from country to country in pursuance of his scheme to secure German arms. Travelling under different names and with fake passports, he went from Java to Japan, from Japan to China, from China back to Japan, and reached San Francisco in June, 1916. Soon thereafter, the United States joined the World War, and Roy and some other Indians were charged in a conspiracy case instituted in San Francisco. Roy evaded the American police and managed to go to Mexico. By that time he had studied the basic books on socialism and communism and had become a socialist. He joined the Mexican Socialist party and became its organising secretary. He developed the party organisation and was elected its General Secretary. He converted the Socialist Party into the Communist Party of Mexico at

an extraordinary conference. He thus became the founder of the first Communist Party outside Soviet Russia.

Roy was invited to Moscow to attend the Second Conference of the Communist International which was to be held in July-August, 1920. Roy reached Moscow prior to the conference and had discussions with Lenin on the national liberation movements in colonial countries like India and China. He differed with Lenin to some extent on the role of colonial capitalist classes in the movements for national liberation. On Lenin's suggestion, the Theses on the National and Colonial Question prepared by him and those prepared by Roy were both placed before the Second Conference of the Communist International for acceptance. Both the Theses were adopted by the Conference.

Roy came to occupy a high position in all the policy-making bodies of the Communist International. His main work at that time was to develop a Communist movement in India. He managed to send a number of Communist emissaries as well as literature to India. He has been recognised as the founder of the Indian Communist Party.

By 1927 Stalin had started his peculiar tactics for the liquidation or expulsion of all persons of independent thinking from the Russian Communist Party and the Communist International. Roy was one of the victims of those tactics. Roy wrote some articles for the press of what was known as the German Communist Opposition, criticising some of the policies adopted by the Communist International. For this offence he was turned out from the Comintern in 1929.

Roy now decided to go to India, although he knew that he would be arrested in India and would have to suffer a long term of imprisonment. He had been accused No. 1 in the famous Kanpur Conspiracy case of 1924, but could not be tried at that time because he was out of India. Roy was prepared to pay the price of a long period of incarceration in order to participate in the Indian freedom movement.

Roy came to India *incognito* in December, 1930, was arrested in July, 1931 and was tried and sentenced to imprisonment of 12 years on the charge of conspiracy to overthrow the British Government. The sentence was reduced to six years in appeal.

After completing his sentence Roy was released from Jail on 20th November, 1936. Immediately thereafter, he issued a public

appeal asking the people to join the Indian National Congress in millions. At the same time, he made it clear that the nationalist movement could not be strengthened unless it underwent a process of radicalisation and democratisation. He urged that the Indian National Congress should be built up from below by organising village and taluka Congress Committees and by vitalising them on the basis of a socio-economic programme of democratic freedom and radical agrarian reform. His idea was to develop the Indian National Congress, with its net-work of village and taluka Committees, as a State within the State. The plan was that at an appropriate time, the Congress as the alternate State would give a call for convening a Constituent Assembly to frame the constitution of free India and that the call would be the signal for the launching of the Indian revolution for democratic freedom.

On the basis of this radical programme, the followers of Roy started work in a large number of rural and urban centres in the country and within a couple of years they became a force to be contended with. In 1940, however, Roy and his followers had to part company with the Indian National Congress because of their difference on the issue of India's participation in the Second World War.

When the "phony" stage of the Second World War was over and the Nazi armies invaded France in April, 1940, Roy declared that the war had become an anti-Fascist War and that it was necessary for the very survival of democracy throughout the world that the war efforts of the Allied Powers should be supported at all costs. "If Fascism succeeds in establishing its domination over the whole of Europe", Roy declared, "then good-bye to revolution and good-bye to Indian freedom as well." He also confidently predicted that "the defeat of Faseism will weaken imperialism" and would bring India nearer to the goal of democratic freedom.

The leaders of the Indian National Congress were, however, of a different opinion. They declared that the Indian people would support the war efforts only if the British Government agreed to set up a National Government in India with full autonomy over defence and foreign affairs. Roy disapproved of this offer of conditional support, because it implied that the war efforts would be opposed if the condition was not accepted. Roy argued that since the success in the anti-Fascist war was necessary for India's democratic freedom,

we could not put conditions on our offer to help in achieving that success. On this issue Roy and his friends left the Indian National Congress and formed a separate party, called the Radical Democratic Party, in December, 1940.

As early as in December, 1942 Roy expressed the view that the Fascist Powers were going to be defeated in the war and that India would get national freedom as a result of the socio-economic changes which were taking place in Great Britain and the allied countries during the course of the anti-Fascist struggle. Roy's anticipations were proved correct. Historians are agreed that India got national freedom largely as a result of the liberating forces generated by the defeat of international Fascism.

When it became clear to him that the Fascist Powers were going to be defeated in the war, Roy switched his attention to the post-war reconstruction of India. He got prepared two basic documents in 1943 and 1944, one "Peoples' Plan for Economic Development of India" and the second a "Draft Constitution of Free India". The documents contained Roy's original contributions to the country's economic and political problems. Contrary to the economic thinking which was then current, Roy gave priority in the People's Plan to the development of agriculture and small scale industry. Production under the Peoples' Plan was to be for use and not for profit, and the objective of economic planning was to supply the primary needs of the people consisting of food, shelter, clothing, education and medicine. The Indian State, according to the Draft Constitution of Free India, was to be organised on the basis of a countrywide net-work of Peoples' Committees having wide powers such as initiating legislation, expressing opinion on pending bilis, recall of representatives and referendum on important national issues. The idea of Peoples' Committees subsequently popularised by Jayaprakash Narayan was mainly derived from Roy's Draft Constitution of Free India.

After the end of the war, Roy began to express his heretical views regarding Communism and Marxism. He differed with Marxism mainly on the role of ideas in human history and on the primacy of moral values. He summarised the philosophy which he was propagating in a number of Theses. These came to be known as the 22 Theses of Radical Humanism. He also issued a manifesto on New Humanism.

The 22 Theses outline the principles of the personal and social

philosophy of Radical Humanism. The basic values of freedom, rationalism and morality are traced in the Theses to man's biological evolution. It is pointed out that quest for freedom and search for truth constitute the basic urge of human progress. The Theses emphasise the inseverability of political and economic freedom and indicate how the comprehensive ideal of political and economic freedom may be achieved.

Further discussion of the principles enunciated in the 22 Theses and the Manifesto led Roy to the conclusion that party politics was inconsistent with the ideal of democracy and that it was liable to degenerate into power politics. Roy was of the view that political power in a democracy should reside in primary organisation of the people such as People's Committees and should not be usurped by any political party. He was further of the view that particularly in countries like India, where a major section of the electorate was illiterate, party politics was bound to become an unprincipled scramble for power. These ideas led to the dissolution of the Radical Democratic Party in an All India Conference held in December, 1948 and the launching of a movement called the Radical Humanist Movement.

One of the new ideas developed by Roy during his Radical Humanist phase related to the concept of "cooperative economy". In a cooperative economy, the means of Production would not belong either to the capitalist class or to the State. They would belong to the workers themselves. Roy was of the view that cooperative economy was superior to both capitalism and State ownership.

Roy was an intellectual giant. He was a constant source of original ideas. Throughout his life, he applied his great intellectual powers in the service of the ideal of freedom. Freedom was the basic inspiration and consuming passion of his entire life.

—*V.M. Tarkunde*

New Delhi. 31. 5. 1982

INTRODUCTION

This is not a treatise on Sinology. The very title of the book makes that evident. Nevertheless, a general investigation in the history of the country from the earliest days is necessary in order to place in a proper perspective the social and political problems of contemporary China, a treatment of which is the subject matter of the book. The book assumes a scientific character inasmuch as a number of basic social and political problems are dealt with theoretically, so that they could be treated intelligently in their peculiar Chinese appearance. Much confusion has been caused, for example, on the question of Feudalism, as well as by the mechanical application of what Marx called the "Asiatic mode of production", as an inflexible formula.

If bourgeois Sinology is a sterile controversy among pedants, Marxian investigation of the history of China has hardly begun. What little Marx and Engels themselves wrote about China was based upon very insufficient material, and, therefore, cannot be accepted as the last word on the subject. Still, mechanical quotations from the fragmentary writings of the founders of scientific socialism have until now been the point of departure of Marxist Sinology. Obviously, with such a method, which is hardly Marxist, not much light can be thrown upon the dark corners in the history of the Chinese society. Instead of setting up ill-conceived, unfounded theories as the last word in Marxian Sinology, true Marxists should do the spade-work. Materials should be collected and systematized on the lines of Marxian methodology.

Not a few Marxian Sinologues are still over-awed by the imposing learnedness of bourgeois Sinology. While combating it

apparently, they nevertheless remain bound to its unscientific methodology. How the mist of bourgeois Sinology still hangs over the minds of many Marxian Sinologues, is evidenced by the habit of seizing upon phenomena like the age-long isolation and the system of artificial irrigation as the keys to the Chinese puzzle. To describe these historical phenomena and to point out what influence they had on the evolution of Chinese society, do not bring us to the root of the problems. It is necessary to ascertain how those peculiar phenomena came into existence.

In the opening chapters of this book, an attempt has been made to ascertain the cause of the specific features in the social organism of China. This has been done, on the one hand, by disregarding the pedantry of bourgeois Sinology and, on the other hand, by discarding the empiricism of the so-called Marxist experts. Not being a treatise on Sinology, this book does not concern itself with an examination of the different theories set up regarding the history of China. Here the subject is approached positively. For the purpose of the book, it is immaterial whether Confucius lived six hundred years or eight hundred years before Christ; whether his teachings are codified in five books or nine books; whether he was the Prime Minister or the Minister of Finance of one of the innumerable Clan-States of ancient China. Besides, there is no established authority regarding these and other chronological details. It is possible to state the fundamental principles of Confucianism without entering into the hair-splitting scholasticism of bourgeois Sinology. That has been done without profuse references to, and long quotations from, the so-called standard works on China. The author has no desire to impose the reader with a show of vast learning.

Then, my object is not to study Confucianism or Taoism or any other school of thought in ancient China, as such. Marxism does not allow that. The basic principles of the conflicting schools have been ascertained and stated in brief only as evidence of the fierce class antagonism that grew out of the dissolution of the tribal society. The next step is to investigate what mode of production caused that antagonism. That brings us to the decisive factor of the process, namely, endowments of nature at the disposal of the ancient Chinese.

In establishing the deductions, I have referred to Morgan alone as the authority. That does not imply that there is no other authority for the deduction. Had I been engaged in a purely technical scientific

investigation, I could call upon Waitz, Schweinfurth, Ratzel, Eyre, Stanley, Burton and others for evidence in support of my view. But here again, I have not followed the usual method of measuring unknown regions with the yard-stick of established theories. In course of an objective investigation, facts have been discovered, and deductions drawn from them. Besides, the theory that at the dawn of civilisation the mode of production, consequently the division of labour, and the entire course of social evolution, is primarily determined by the endowments of nature, constitutes the corner-stone of Historical Materialism, Marx formulated the theory; Engels elaborated it on the basis of Morgan's discovery of the clan-type of society. Later, in elucidating the fundamental principles of Marxism, Plekhanov maintained it with the aid of further knowledge, subsequently acquired, about ancient society. Answering the question— "By what is this economic structure itself datermined?" —Plekhanov wrote: "Marx's answer reduces the whole problem of the development of economic structure to the problem of the causes that determined the evolution of the productive forces of society. In this latter form, the problem is primarily solved with reference to the nature of the geographical environments." ("Fundamental Problems of Marxism", page 32).

A clear knowledge of the natural conditions and forces of production available to the ancient Chinese alone can enable us to discover the fundamental laws of social evolution behind the peculiarities in the history of the country. Approached with that knowledge, all the social and political peculiarities in the past, and the problems of the present, cease to be baffling.

Owing to their empirical approach to the problem, experts on China, calling themselves Marxists, have set up and pulled down all sorts of theories about the structure of Chinese society, not only of the past, but even of to day. The greatest confusion has been created by the controversy about the existence of Feudalism in China. To clear this confusion, it is necessary to have a definition of Feudalism. It would be futile to enter into a dispute over a thing which remains an abstract conception. Therefore, it is necessary to ascertain the essence of the social relation, traditionally called Feudalism, in order to have a standard for the investigation of the evolution of Chinese society.

Then again, it is not the term Feudalism that is decisive. The

main thing is the relation of property in land as the principal means of social production. The development of the form of landownership, usually known as feudal, was determined by the conditions of production in the preceding period. Those conditions, in their turn, were different in different parts of the world, owing to the variety of geographical environments and natural gifts. Therefore, the private property in land and the class relation based upon it, could not possibly be realised in a uniform appearance throughout the world. By studying the history of China, we discover that social relations constituting the essence of Feudalism did develop in that country, though not under forms generally recognised as feudal.

If the structure of the contemporary Chinese society contains no element of Feudalism, then, either this has been destroyed, or did not ever exist. It has not been destroyed, because the bourgeois revolution which ordinarily performs that historic task, has not yet been completed in China. So, it follows that Feudalism never existed in China. What happened, then, when the tribal social order decomposed? The dissolution of primitive Communism inevitably leads to the creation of private property in the means of production; and in that period of antiquity, land is the main means of production. The class relation based upon the pre-capitalist private property in land, no matter what form it assumes, is the essence of the feudal social order. A convenient way out of the dilemma is found in a mechanical quotation from Marx. A sentence from the Introduction to "The Critique of Political Economy" serves the purpose. The passage quoted is: "In broad outlines, the Asiatic, antique, feudal and modern capitalist modes of production can be depicted as the progressive epochs in the economic formation of society." Long before social conditions in the Oriental countries were subjected to Marxist examination, Plekhanov theoretically dealt with the question of the "Asiatic mode of production" and Plekhanov's authority as a Marxian theorist has survived his political debacle. According to him, upon Morgan's discovery of the clan-type of social organisation, "Marx modified his views as to the relation between the classical method of production and the Asiatic method." ("Fundamental Problems of Marxism", page 50). If the sentence in the Introduction to the "Critique of Political Economy" contains the conclusive opinion of Marx, then, "Asiatic mode of production", being a stage earlier than the antique mode of production, must be coincident with primitive Communism.

For, the antique society grew out of the dissolution of the primitive Communist tribal order. Then, the "Asiatic mode" must eventually develop into the antique mode of production. But when later on we find Marx explaining what he meant by the "Asiatic mode of production", it appears to be a stage of social evolution not only very far away from primitive Communism, but well above the level of antique production. It is based not only upon private property in land, but also in other means of production created by man, and even partially upon primitive capitalist production.

In that stage, the form of private property in land which, according to Marx, "is quite suitable for becoming the basis of stationary conditions of society, such as we see in Asia" is realised no longer in labour-rent, but in the rent in kind. Further, "in this form of rent, it is by no means necessary that rent in kind, which represents surplus labour, should fully exhaust the entire surplus labour of the rural family. Compared to labour-rent, the producer has rather more elbow room to gain time for some surplus labour whose product shall belong to himself. This type of social relation characterises the period of tramition from the feudal to the capitalist mode of production. Under it, the peasant outgrows legal serfdom, labour-rent being the classical expression of feudal relation; but the entire process of his production still takes place under social relations primarily determined by the pre-capitalist ownership of land. At the same time, a part of the proceeds of his labour, performed over and above for the production of his indispensable means of subsistence, tends to remain in his possession. That is, he begins to acquire private property, and thus there grows the possibility that the direct producer may acquire the means to exploit other labourers."

The quotations in the above paragraph are all from "Capital", Volume III (American edition, page 924). Instead of quoting more extensively, I should refer the reader to the entire Section III on "Rent in Kind".

At the time of writing the Introduction to "The Critique of Political Economy", Marx obviously meant something different by the "Asiatic mode of production". Otherwise, the gradation of the epochs of social progress, as stated then, would contradict his entire theory of Historical Materialism. Evidently, what he had in mind was the theocratic type of antique social order as obtained in Egypt and Babylon. Having at that time not sufficient knowledge about

the ancient history of other Oriental countries, Marx tended to think that the theocratic type was common to them all. But the discovery of the clan-type of ancient society proved that the Asiatic was not a distinct stage of social evolution preceding the antique; that both of them grew out of the dissolution of the clan social order, and were two parallel types. On this, Plekhanov writes: "Each of these two types of economic organisation appeared as the outcome of an increase in the forces of production, an increase which had occurred within the social organisation based upon the clan system, and ultimately led to the break-up of this organisation. If the two types, the classical and the Oriental,- respectively, differed greatly each from the other, this was because, in both the respective cases, the development was influenced by the geographical environments". ("Fundamental Problems of Marxism", page 51).

This basic principle of Historical Materialism is stated also in the Introduction to "The Critique of Political Economy" : "No type of social structure ever perishes until there have been developed all the productive forces for which it has room; and new and higher forces of production never appear on the scene until the material conditions of existence requisite for their development have matured within the womb of the old society."

The ancient Babylonian and Egyptian society perished; but that was not the case in China or India. A type of social organisation perishes only when all the productive forces inherent in it are exhausted without creating the germs of a new social order. This algebra of Marxism permits the deduction that the ancient social order in China and India was essentially different from that in Egypt and Babylon; in other words, there is no such thing as a uniform type of Asiatic mode of production antecedent to the antique. It is a historical fact that ancient society in China and India did not go the same way as in Egypt and Babylon. It could not remain stationary for ages without perishing. What, then, happened to it?

Being only a parallel type of antique social order, it was bound to attain the next higher stage—Feudalism. Here again, historical causes, geographical environments and natural conditions of production affected the progress and gave distinct appearances to the new social relations which, nevertheless, were essentially feudal. Otherwise, the monistic principle of Historic Materialism would be disproved, and the Marxian perspective of history, that Communism

is the common destiny of the human race, would be untenable.

Those who dispute the existence of Feudalism in China base themselves on another fragmentary quotation from Marx. Dealing with the creation of private property in land as the condition for ground-rent, Marx writes: "Into Asia, it (the legal conception of free property in land) has been imported by Europeans in but a few places." ("Capital", Volume III, page 723). On the authority of this single sentence, it is maintained that private property in land never existed in China, and in the absence of this basic condition, there could not subsist any feudal relation. Read in its full context, the sentence, however, does not provide such a conclusive authority. Firstly, in the preceding sentence, two distinct types of private property in land are mentioned: one growing out of the dissolution of the organic order of society, and the other out of the capitalist production. It is not clear from the text whether, in connection with Asia, Marx meant private property in land generally, or the latter type. Most probably, he meant the latter type; for, the reference is made in connection with the treatment of the process of the development of capitalist ground-rent. Secondly, postulating that the dissolution of the organic order of society is a condition for the growth of the legal conception of private property in land, Marx could not logically assert that this growth did not take place in Asia until the advent of the Europeans. For, there the organic order of society had broken down, if not completely, long before the Europeans came. He very likely meant that the legal conception of capitalist private property in land was imported by the Europeans into Asia. Thirdly, later on, in the same treatise, he writes: "The owner (of land) may be the individual representing the community, as in Asia." So, on the authority of Marx, the absence of private property in land in China cannot be proved. Private property in land *in a specific form* did exist in China. It was not capitalist property. Consequently, the social relations resulting from it were essentially feudal.

The confusion arises from the fact that pre-capitalist ownership of land in China did not assume the form usually labelled as feudal. The decisive factor, however, is not the outward form, but the underlying relation of classes. Marx holds that the Asiatic form of landownership does not essentially differ from the classical feudal system under which "this private ownership in land may be merely

accessory to the ownership of the person of the direct producers by some individual." ("Capital", Vol. III**,** page 743). There is no essential difference, because in both the cases private property in land realises itself in pre-capitalist rent absorbing practically the entire surplus labour of the producer, who may or may not be bound legally by the conditions of serfdom. Describing the conditions, under which peasants appear to cultivate the soil as "free producer", that is, not legally in the state of serfdom, as in China, Marx concludes: "Under such conditions, the surplus labour of the nominal owners of the land cannot be filched from them by any economic measures, but must be forced from them by other measures, whatever may be the form assumed by them." ("Capital", Volume III, page 918).

Finally, one more quotation from Marx conclusively proves that the system of pre-capitalist relation of property in land in China is essentially feudal. "If the direct producers are not under the sovereignty of a private landlord, but rather under that of a State which stands over them as their direct landlord and sovereign, then, rent and taxes coincide .... Under these circumstances, the subject need not be politically or economically under any harder pressure than that common to all subjection to that State. The State is then the supreme landlord. The sovereignty consists here in the ownership of land concentrated on a national scale. But, on the other hand, no private ownership of land exists, although there is both private and common possession and use of land." ("Capital", Vol. III, page 918).

Having cleared away these theoretical questions, the book ceases to be scientific, except as history. The principal thesis is political. It is a study of the social character and perspective of the national revolution in China. The study, however, transcends the limits of one single country, and proceeds to ascertain the tactical and organisational principles of the revolutionary movements in the colonial countries generally in the light of the lesson learned in China. Nor is this of a detached academic nature. It is the result of long revolutionary political activities in my own country as well as in China. As a matter of fact, I have been associated with the revolutionary movement in the entire colonial world, having for years played a leading role in the activities of the Communist International in that sphere. Even before the foundation of the Commu-

nist International, I had visited China, the Dutch Indies, the Philippines and Mexico, and took part in the revolutionary movements in those countries.

The chapters dealing with the contemporary history of China are written on the basis of personal knowledge and experience. I have had personal contact with most of the leading figures of contemporary China. I had already met Sun Yat-sen in 1916, and the criticism of his earlier social and political views is largely based upon personal acquaintance. In the opening months of 1927, when the national revolution reached its critical stage, I was in China as the representative of the Communist International. Personal interest, however, has not been permitted to mar the objectivity of the study. How far I have succeeded in this, will be judged by the reader. For example, Borodin is an old personal friend of mine, and I still cherish him as such; yet, he comes in for unsparing criticism. On the other hand, severe condemnation of the former leader of the Communist Party of China, Chen Tu-hsiu, for the fatal tactical mistakes committed, does not prevent me from appreciating his role as the leading ideologist of the Chinese Revolution.

The concluding chapter*, added at the last moment, brings the history up to date. The political prognosis and deductions, however, are contained in the preceding chapters which were written last year. Subsequent events have proved their correctness, showing that I have succeeded in the task undertaken, namely, to draw the lessons of the Chinese Revolution.

Berlin, July 1930. —M.N. ROY

* The reference is to Chapter XXI. Two more chapters and an Epilogue have been added subsequently.

CHAPTER I

THE FOUNDATION OF CHINESE SOCIETY

The present has its roots struck deep in the past. What exists today has evolved out of the life of yesterday, and of the innumerable days preceding. The present can be correctly understood and the future clearly visualised, therefore, only with the aid of a proper appreciation of the historical background.

The history of China vanishes in the dark ages. Side by side with the Mediterranean and Semitic races, the Chinese entered the early stages of human progress thousands of years ago. China is generally considered to be the land of a very old civilisation. But in course of time, the people inheriting the Semitic and the Mediterranean cultures strode ahead to build the modern civilisation on the basis of the ancient heritage, while the Chinese failed to keep pace. Mediaeval, even antique, social relations still subsist in contemporary China. Modern civilisation has touched her but on the surface, causing more evil than good to her teeming millions. It is not an unusual phenomenon that peoples having reached a comparatively high stage of progress in antiquity entirely disappeared from existence. But China did not accompany Babylon and ancient Egypt into the oblivion. She struggled ahead, but was left a long way behind by others who appeared on the scene later. In view of that curious caprice of history, China did not receive proper attention in the study of human evolution except as a special case, difficult to understand; and modern China has become a baffling problem for many. It is a "Chinese Puzzle" which appears to defy the established laws of social progress. But there is no puzzle in history which cannot be solved with the aid of the modern method of treating historical problems as problems of science, approaching them with the assumption that there is some cause for each historical phenomenon, and that it can

be discovered.

The causes for the prolonged stagnation of the Chinese society are to be found in the conditions under which its foundation was laid, thousands of years ago. The fact that antique China survived destruction indicates that she possessed a vitality altogether lacking in the case of the Babylonians, Egyptians and the barbarians of the Western Hemisphere. But the vitality at the same time was not great enough to overcome completely the opposing forces of dissolution, as was the case with the Mediterranean and Semitic races.

A scientific examination of the history of China shows that there is nothing in it which is *essentially* different from the history of any other civilisation. Whatever distinction appears to be there is rather of quantity than of quality. The progress has been slower in China than in the countries of the modern civilisation. The historians who find deep-rooted peculiarities in the Chinese civilisation, do so with a motive. It is to prove that, owing to her innate peculiarities, China is not able to absorb the conquests of modern civilisation; that she is constitutionally incapable of adopting modern economic and political institutions; and that, therefore, she must remain a legitimate prey for the standard-bearers of modern civilisation. That is not a scientific reading of history.

On the other hand, many of the Chinese themselves also believe in, and preach, the cult of "special genius". Not able to understand the causes for the deplorable stagnation of their national life, they make a virtue out of it. Afraid of the spectre of racial inferiority, they idealise the past which has brought about the present misery. But the backwardness of their country is a fact. It cannot be removed by glorifying its causes. On the contrary, the causes must be boldly discovered and ruthlessly extirpated. The lingering faith in the infallibility and eternalness of their ancient culture, on the part of even those Chinese who desire to see their country progress on the road of modern civilisation, renders China a baffling problem to grasp. Indeed, this ideological contradiction is a part of the problem. After centuries of fossilised existence, old China is at last disappearing to make room for a new one. The mediaeval structure of society, sanctified by the teachings of Confucius and Mencius, has been undermined, though slowly, by the rise of new forces and under the impact of modern civilisation and culture from abroad. It is tottering. But the ideology of new China in the throes of rebirth

can no longer be the same as of the modern civilisation ushered in by the Renaissance in Europe. The ideology of the centuries-belated Chinese Renaissance cannot be that which no longer breathes the spirit of a rising civilisation, but seeks to galvanise a decayed order of society. Hence the ideologists of Chinese nationalism look wistfully back to the Golden Age, just when the Chinese people are engaged in a gigantic struggle for creating a social order higher than capitalist civilisation. Sun Yat-sen formulated his "Three People's Principles", and the "Five-Power Constitution" of the new State on the basis of the political philosophy of Confucius and Mencius. The ideologists of Chinese nationalism find the "Foundation of Modern China" in the debris of antiquity.

It is true that the present has its roots struck deep in the past, and the builders of the future can draw inspiration from the past, but the tree grows out of the seed only by destroying it. If the seed is lovingly preserved for what it potentially contains, its pregnancy becomes sterile—the tree never blossoms.

To conjure up the past is not a Chinese peculiarity. The ideological pioneers of the European bourgeoisie, while heralding the rise of a new social order, harked back to the pagan culture of ancient Greece. Indeed, the bourgeois social order was reared upon the twin pillars of Hellenic philosophy and Roman Law. The philosophers of ancient Greece and, later, the law-givers of Rome were the ideologists of a revolution which shifted the basis of human society from primitive communism to private property. And bourgeois society, the high-watermark of human progress based on private property, was born with the rich heritage of the Greek and Roman cultures. Not only the men of the Renaissance, but even the rationalist thinkers of the eighteenth century invoked a legendary "Golden Age" while preaching the doctrine of *social contract,* as the cardinal principle of the ideology of a new order, on the authority of the philosophers of ancient Greece. Revolting against the authority of the Roman Church. Martin Luther masqueraded as the reincarnation of the very founder of that institution. The great French Revolution destroyed feudal aristocracy and monarchist absolutism: yet, its leaders believed that they were engaged in the task of creating a state on the model of the Roman Republic which had laid the foundation of the very social institutions they were abolishing. As a matter of fact, the bourgeoisie have always conjured up the past as

the authority for their revolutionary thoughts liquidating old traditions and heralding new social relations.[1] Themselves afraid of the great potentiality of the revolution they were advocating, they invoked the authority of the dead past for justifying their action.

If the European middle class, when they were still a revolutionary factor, looked to the past for inspiration, it is no wonder that the Chinese middle class should do the same now that their class throughout the world have become a bulwark of reaction. The teachings of the Greek philosophers, more than two thousand years after their time, provided the basis for the ideology of the bourgeois social order in Europe. In China, Confucius and his disciples, like their Greek contemporaries, also for the first time recognised the necessity of political organisation of society and enunciated the rudimentary laws for governing social relations. But their teachings did not inspire subsequent thinkers to herald the rise of a higher social order. The seeds of Renaissance and the resulting spiritual progress of Europe were in the ancient culture of Greece. Confucianism was not so happily pregnant. The misfortune was due not to any innate inferiority of the Chinese mind, but due to the material conditions under which the foundation of Chinese culture was laid. The responsibility for the deplorable social stagnation of China is usually laid at the door of the Confucian culture. But the correct interpretation of history should be to reverse the relation. Having entered the first stages of civilisation together with the fore-runners of modem European nations, the Chinese people, nevertheless, lagged behind in centuries of social stagnation, because of the defectiveness of the material basis of their civilisation. The social stagnation, caused by defective endowments of nature, made it possible that the progressive elements in Confucian culture were overcome by the conservative.

Originally, Chinese culture did not differ essentially from the contemporary Greek or Indian culture. In either case, the philosophical foundation was the ideology of human society outgrowing tribal organisation, based upon blood relations, and striving towards political institutions governed by the relation of private property. The subsequent growth of human culture was the result of the evolution of private property. The evolution of private property, in its turn, was caused by the development of the means of production. The progressive perfection of tools in the hands of man—the development of the

means of production—again is determined by physical conditions. Only in the higher stages of civilisation, man invents powerful tools which can overcome elemental conditions. In the primitive stages, production is still largely governed by the endowment of nature, namely, the flora and fauna of the country, geographical environments, animal resources, supply of labour, etc.

The boundary between barbarism and civilisation is difficult to indicate. Indeed, there exists no definite dividing line. The germ of civilisation was in barbarism, and remnants of the latter persisted for a long time while the former developed. The factor that clearly distinguishes civilised society from barbarism is the growth of private property. It revolutionises production, its mode and means, and therefore marks the beginning of a new stage of human evolution. The growth of private property begins only after man has acquired the knowledge of making land bear fruit. So the cultivation of soil for producing food can be reckoned as the first sign of civilisation. A group of human beings begin to organise themselves territorially and politically only after they have reached the stage of evolution in which they get their livelihood mainly by cultivation of the earth. In that stage, man ceases to subsist, as in the preceding stages of savagery and barbarism, almost entirely by his own physical effort. For cultivation of the soil he supplements his labour by employing animals which previously he killed to consume. The transformation of animal from an article of consumption into the means of production is a land-mark in the process of social evolution. It lays the foundation of private property. By harnessing animal energy to supplement his labour in the production of the means of subsistence, man outgrows barbarism and enters the stage of civilisation.[2]

From the remotest days of history, the inhabitants of China got their subsistence by cultivating the land. But the country was very poor in such animals as could be domesticated to become means of production.

Here is the weak spot in the foundation of Chinese society. The Chinese people entered the earlier stages of civilisation without possessing precisely that gift of nature which, in that period, in addition to human labour, is the basic means of production.[3] The scarcity of cattle and horses was a decisive factor in the earlier stages of the evolution of Chinese society. Eventually, it contributed more to the prolonged stagnation of national life than any other single factor.

Limiting the margin of surplus produce, it obstructed the free development of private property. Defective growth of private property, in its turn, hindered the expansion of the productive forces. The mode of production consequently assumed peculiar forms, placing a specific stamp upon the whole process of social evolution for hundreds of years. Primitive cultivation of land did not develop into field agriculture, socialising human labour, first in the form of slavery, and then of serfdom in the typical European sense. Agriculture developed not extensively but intensively. Instead of bringing larger and larger areas under cultivation, greater and greater amount of labour was concentrated on limited areas in order to make them bear more and more fruit for meeting the growing requirements of an expanding population. Garden culture, artificial manuring and extensive irrigation became the specific features of the Chinese mode of agricultural production, conditioned by the defective endowment of nature.

China was not alone in the misfortune of not possessing cattle and horse in the earlier stages of social evolution. The native races of America also suffered from the same misfortune. Consequently, having attained a well-advanced stage of barbarism, they perished.[4] Animals have more than once settled the fate of entire peoples. The possession of horses, in addition to fire-arms, was the decisive technical factor in the conquest of Mexico and Peru by the Spaniards.

The roots of the proverbial conservatism of the Chinese people can be traced to the conditions under which they entered the first stages of early civilisation. Owing to the fact that the primitive Chinese inhabited a country poor in animals adapted to domestication, nomadic habits did not develop in them. In the absence of animals in abundance, hunting and pasturage cannot become the means of subsistence of mankind. Most probably, the fish and cereal periods were contiguous in the process of social evolution of ancient China. They were not separated by the early meat period in which animal becomes the means of subsistence (not yet of production) of the primitive man. The primitive Chinese must have wandered along the great rivers flowing from the Central Asiatic mountains to the Pacific Ocean. Consequently, their main means of subsistence must have been fish. Later on, thanks to the flat and alluvial nature of the soil, and in the absence of any other means of subsistence (meat and milk), it was possible for them to discover, perhaps sven when other

primitive human families were still leading a nomadic life, that the land could be made to bear fruit by cultivation. The knowledge that the earth could be cultivated to bear food marks the termination of the nomadic period. The primitive Chinese most probably reached the stage of settled conditions without passing through the stage of great migrations as in the case of the Aryan and Semitic races.

Conservatism is the characteristic of any one possessing something to conserve. Agriculture creates interest in land; as soon as man learns to cultivate it, he becomes attached to it. He settles down in a fixed region, claiming as his own the land which he can make bear him fruit. Therefore, the knowledge to secure food by cultivating the earth can be reckoned as the first rung in the ladder of civilisation, that is of organised society. This knowledge eliminates the necessity of constant and continuous migration in search of food and for grazing cattle. It renders possible that a large number of human beings settle down definitely in a certain region. There follows then the evolution of private property, which eventually dissolves the tribal organisation based upon blood relation, and the process of political organisation of society begins.

Thanks to the natural endowments of the country they inhabited originally, the ancient Chinese most probably entered the stage of settled existence earlier than any other race; China perhaps was the home of the earliest organised human society. But the very condition which in that early epoch placed her at the van of human progress, at the same time constituted the weak spot in the foundation of her civilisation. The Chinese society was born with an organic disease, so to say; its subsequent evolution was crippled by that original misfortune.

Similar phenomena of social evolution are found in other parts of the world as well. For example, the aboriginal races of America reached the latter stages of barbarism when the inhabitants of the eastern hemisphere had hardly emerged from savagery. While the latter had just left the primeval forests and were still wandering with their domesticated animals in search of food and pasture, the American races were well advanced in the stage of farinaceous subsistence. They had learned to produce food through the cultivation of the soil.[5] Presently, the barbarian of the eastern hemisphere also learned to cultivate land, and by virtue of possessing domesticated animals not only overtook his American rival but strode ahead to

civilisation while the other stagnated and eventually perished in the stage of barbarism which he had attained earlier. Unequal endowment of nature is the cause of such uneven progress of social evolution.

Man did not learn to domesticate animals and cultivate the soil simultaneously. Neither the one nor the other primitive conquest alone enabled him to emerge out of barbarism. The combination of both the early achievements brought him to the gates of civilisation. The foundation of civilised society is laid as soon as man learns to harness animal energy to aid his own labour for cultivating the soil. By that achievement, he creates conditions under which, for the first time in the history of his evolution, his exertions are no longer devoted exclusively to getting the means of a bare subsistence. A part of his energy is released for other purposes—to create new values, which in their turn stimulate further evolution of the means of production. The possession of domesticated animals as the means of production eventually leads to the possession of land. The possession of land and the ability to make it bear fruit, in ever growing quantity, put an end to the habit of migration. The ability of one man to cultivate more land than he could if he were to depend exclusively upon his own labour and that of his human dependents, creates the impetus for acquisition. The property in land, first tribal, then patriarchal, later private, evolves; the basis of civilisation is thus laid.

The use of domesticated animals for the cultivation of soil creates a surplus of human labour as a precondition for the institution of slavery—the pillar of antique civilisation. With the aid of animal power and improved tools, a diminishing number of human beings is required to produce food and other elementary necessities of the entire community. Consequently, a growing number of men are thrown out of the process of necessary production, and become available for use as chattels in the primitive production of commodities. Possessing labour power in excess of what is necessary for its subsistence and reproduction, a community can employ the surplus human energy for further conquests, either of nature or of the neighbouring human communities. In that condition, slavery becomes the basis of economic progress and political expansion. The surplus human labour becomes the object of sale and purchase by the few owning the means of production, the main item of which, in that early stage of civilisation, is land. Slavery is originally brought into

existence by the displacement of human labour through the employment of animal power in the production of the necessities of the primitive society. It attains the classical form, as in Greece, the Semetic countries, and Rome, when large numbers of prisoners are made in wars.

Man's knowledge and ability to make the land bear fruit did not create fully all three conditions in ancient China. The cultivation of land by itself is not a broad enough basis for a civilised society to be built upon. It becomes so only when it represents a mode of production in which human labour is supplemented by the employment of domesticated animals. Like the American races, the Chinese in an earlier epoch favoured by natural conditions, learned the art of cultivating land perhaps earlier than other races. The achievement represented their entrance into the initial stage of primitive civilisation, in so far as the knowledge and ability to make the land bear fruit enabled them to settle down in a definite region and consequently to lay the foundation of an organised society. But just as in the case of American barbarism, early Chinese civilisation was presently handicapped by the very same natural conditions which had accelerated its progress in an earlier period. In the absence of domesticated animals, particularly cattle, in ancient China, agriculture did not release sufficient human labour from the process of necessary production. The same cause obstructed the evolution of private property in land. The evolution of property began to stagnate in the stage of patriarchal ownership; for, by his own labour alone and with the very primitive tool of that period, one man could hardly get his subsistence by cultivating land. Joint labour was an indispensable necessity.

Insufficient impetus for the early accumulation of land seriously affected the growth of slavery, and later on, of serfdom. Human labour not having been displaced in a sufficient quantity from the process of necessary production, the foundation of the system of slavery, as a distinct mode of production, was not laid. As conditions were not favourable for the concentration of land on the basis of private ownership, subsequently feudalism failed to develop in the classical European form. And in a still later period, the growth of manufacture was retarded by the fact that practically the entire social labour was required for the production of food.

Reared upon such a defective foundation, the Chinese society

evolved haltingly and painfully. Except for this innate weakness, caused by the defective endowment of nature, Chinese civilisation in its early stages had no other distinctive feature. Indeed, the conditions in China at the time of Confucius were remarkably similar to those of contemporary Greece. The mission of Confucius was the same as that of the ancient Greek law-givers like Draco and Solon, namely, to lay the moral basis for the political organisation of society. Yet the seed sown in the countries around the Levant eventually blossomed forth into the modern civilisation of Europe, while China laboured in dark ages which appeared to be interminable. So we must put our finger on the defective spot in the foundation of the Chinese society as the key to the "Chinese Puzzle". Nor was the depressing darkness of the middle-ages a peculiarity of China. During the centuries intervening between the fall of the Roman Empire and the Renaissance, Europe also was plunged into mediaeval darkness. When, after two thousand years of a painful history—of wars, invasions, devastations, famine and bitter class struggle—the Chinese society showed signs of surviving the defects of its birth, it was overtaken by yet another misfortune. That was the obstruction of its normal development through foreign intervention. The heirs of the ancient Greek civilisation invaded China, as it were, to punish her for having in the remote past been a nearly successful rival of fair Hellas.

Very little authentic is known of the two thousand years of Chinese history before Confucius. The only record of that period is contained in the Holy Books which, judged from their character and contents, can hardly be granted the dignity of history. They can rather be compared with the great Epics of Greece and India. They are a record of the ideology of a primitive civilisation. Although there is sufficient evidence as regards the spuriousness of some of the Classics, there cannot be much doubt about it that fragmentary records of the intellectual life of that remote period did exist in some form or other.* It is immaterial whether Confucius compiled them, or edited them, or actually wrote the Classics on the basis of the fragmentary records that came down to him. The fact is that they do prove two things: that the ancient Chinese culture was not irreligious as commonly believed; and that Chinese society about a dozen

centuries before Christ had definitely crystallised into tribal federations and confederations based upon agriculture as the principal, if not the only, mode of production.

The foundation of the pre-Confucian society was the *Tsing Tien* system of land-holding. That was a consanguine organisation binding nine families of the same clan into a productive unit. In the earlier part of the *Chow* Regime (11th—3rd centuries B.C.), a territory of about a million square kilometers was divided among 1,800 principalities which were tribal organisations like the Greek *phartries* and the Roman *curia.* The social pyramid was as follows: Five family groups made a *kei,* ten *keis* made a *If,* four *lis* made a *leh,* and four *lehs* made a *slang.* The structure bears a striking similarity to the tribal organisation in ancient Greece which was: thirty families made a *gen,* thirty *gens* made a *phartry,* and three *phartries* composed a tribe. That system of tribal organisation was breaking up towards the end of the *Chow* Dynasty, although it persisted in a fossilised form throughout the history of China. A considerable element of it still persists even in the present system of land tenure.

Confucius lived in the period (6th century B.C.) when the *Tsing Tien* system was decaying. The burden of his teachings was restoration of the decayed clan system and, with it as the basic unit, to build up a political state of benevolent despotism. Like the ideologists of the ancient Greek civilisation, Confucius also evolved the philosophy of a state and society based upon class relations. Advocate of a centralised state, he represented the progressive tendency; but the progressive element in his philosophy wai counter-balanced by his defence of a decayed social system which was to be the basis of the centralised state. That contradiction of Confucianism was the ideological reflex of the contradiction in the motive forces of the antique Chinese civilisation.

Bolder thinkers challenged Confucius, and succeeded in overwhelming him for the time being. For more than two hundred years the forces of conservatism lost ground to those of disruption and dissolution. And under the pressure of the same basic contradictions of the situation, the ideologist of the plebeian revolt, *Lao Tze,* degenerated into pessimism and pacifism. But the seeds sown by him found a fertile ground, and eventually fructified in the revolutionary philosophy of the materialists Mu Tze and Yang Tze, particularly the latter who can be called the *enfant terrible* of ancient China. Finally,

in the third century B.C., rose *Yang Chang*. Inspired by him, the *Chin* Revolution sought to abolish the *Tsing Tien* system and unite the country under the absolutism of a feudal emperor. The *Chin* Emperor burned all the writings of Confucius. But presently the *Chin* Revolution consumed itself. The Chinese society gravitated back to the *Tsing Tien* system, and five hundred years after his death Confucius was enthroned definitely as the National Sage of China. Until today he sits on his dilapidated throne, not even the formidable guns of foreign imperialism having been able to shake seriously his position fortified by holy tradition.

Confucius and his philosophy survived the vicissitudes of centuries because he preached reform. In his time conditions of China were not ripe for a revolutionary change. The old system was decaying. But there had not yet arisen a class so divorced from the old mode of production as to be able to build a new social order. The germs of feudalism had indeed been sown; slavery, serfdom and the rest of the specific features of the age were there. But the incipient forces of revolution were organically inter-woven with the basic social units of the consanguine family groups. They were not strong enough to clear away the decayed system.

In its premature entry into the stage of civilisation, the Chinese society had brought with it a heavy ballast of barbarism which seriously impeded its further progress. The collapse of the Chin Revolution showed that, though decayed, the *Tsing Tien* system was still the main spring of China's national economy, and that the feudal mode of production was not yet developed enough to replace it.

The country, however, was in a pitiable state. Taking place under a disadvantage imposed by nature, the primitive accumulation of wealth meant greater deprivation, destitution and oppression for the masses. The absence of the beasts of burden was compensated by human beings who remained tied to the barbarous bondage of blood. The growing greed of incipient feudalism plunged the land into a state of chronic internecine war. Confucius was the ideologist of some improvised system that could save the country from ruin. Conditions, historic and objective, were not ripe for a revolutionary change. The way out of the impasse must be found in some readjustment of jarring relations. Confucius indicated the way, and proposed the creation of a confederation of the semi-feudal, semi-patriarchal states based upon the heritage of barbarism—the consanguine clan organisation. He did

not advocate the destruction of the decayed system. He was not a revolutionary. Conservatism is the main principle of Confucianism. The substance of his teachings was: don't plunge headlong into destruction; make the best of a bad situation; and wait for better days. He was a reformer, and as such he won his exalted position in Chinese history.

As a Minister of the Principality of *Lu* (modern *Shantung),* Confucius tried to construct his ideal state. The main object of his reform was to stabilise the undermined *Tsing Tien* system. He advocated some modifications and measures designed to prevent too many men from being withdrawn from production to swell the army. For that purpose, the kingdom was divided into a number of family groups owning land collectively. They were graded according to the amount of land they held. Each family had to send one of its adult members to the army who, however, did not become, as previously, a soldier by profession. He served in the dual capacity of soldier and peasant in alternate terms. The Confucian reform sought to curb the operation of the incipient feudal elements. They, therefore, conspired against Confucius and soon turned him out of office, to wander over the country in search of a "wise king". His life proved that Confucius had undertaken a task not to be accomplished. He died a disappointed man. His last words were: "No wise king appears; no one in the kingdom wishes to make me his master. It is time for me to die."[7]

The fall of Confucius in his life-time, and the defeat of his opponents two hundred years later, show how extremely complicated the situation was. The older order was decaying, but it still possessed great persistence. On the other hand, the elements making for a new system, though gaining ground, were still very far from the power of playing a decisive role.

Confucius himself testifies to the growth of feudal forces, and hints that the salvation of the situation was in the restriction of those forces. Upon his expulsion from the principality of *Lu,* he exclaimed in indignation: "The princes nowadays have insatiable desire for riches and are indefatigable in pleasure and extravagances. They are negligent and lazy; they are haughty and arrogant. They exhaust the people and place themselves against the multitude, and try to overthrow them who are going the right way."[8]

Notwithstanding the dwarfed development of the new social

forces, the age of Confucius was an age of bitter class struggle. Internecine wars among the tribal chiefs had proceeded with such ferocity that by the eighth century B.C. the number of principalities had been reduced to twenty. Only four hundred years before, the number was about eighteen hundred. In the midst of that holocaust stood the theocratic *Chow* Dynasty claiming paramount power. The country was laid desolate by a fierce struggle for supremacy. The people were oppressed to the utmost limit. The aspirations of the dominant and oppressed classes were expressed respectively by Confucius and *Lao Tze.* While the former sought to save society from violent dissolution by introducing his Draconian moral codes, the latter raised the voice of primitive democracy. *Lao Tze* preached the doctrine of a plebeian revolt.

"Those that are stark and rigid are followers of death. Those that are tender and weak are followers of life. A strong army does not (always) win, and a strong tree grows to decay. The strong and great are coward, the tender and the weak are uplifted. There is nothing under the Heaven that excels water in tenderness and weakness, yet there is nothing that surpasses it in efficiency when it attacks the hard and the strong. This is known to everybody, that the strong is conquered by the weak, that the rigid is conquered by the tender."[9]

As against the rigid social codes of Confucius, his opponent further preached: "Men naturally follow the ways of the *Tao* (Heavenly Way). Let them alone. Do not subject them to rules and formalities which, being unnatural, distort their normal evolution. The more mandates and laws are enacted, the more there will be thieves and robbers. I fan end were put to sageness, and wisdom put away the great robbers would cease to arise; if jade was put away and pearls broken to bits, the small thieves would not appear."[10]

This doctrine of *laissez fairs* was a mighty challenge to the Confucian social philosophy based on an elaborate system of duties and obligations. The consanguine family was the corner-stone of Confucian society; the children were to be completely subordinated to the parents. Confucius ordained: "Serve the parents, be loyal to the Government, and establish a good name for yourself." The individual was but an insignificant cog in the ruthless wheel which was the expression of the *jen.*[11] Such severe codes of conduct were necessary to prevent the threatening social disintegration. The independence of the tribal organisation should be subordinated to a central authority,

if society was not to disintegrate in consequence of the constant and continued feuds amongst them. China stood faced with the historic necessity of codified laws and defined power for public institutions. On the other hand, to secure the subordination of the independent tribal organisations to a central authority, it was necessary that the power, duty and obligation of that authority should also be clearly defined. Therefore, Confucius laid down codes of conduct not only for the people, but also for the theocratic monarch himself. For the guidance of the latter, the mythical example of the Three Divine Kings and Five Sovereigns was held up. The portrait of those mythical personages was drawn in the *Shih Ching* (The Book of History). Most probably those ideal characters were drawn, at least heavily retouched, by Confucius himself. The social significance of the Confucian "wise king" was essentially the same as that of the "philosophers" in Plato's Republic. Both represented the abstract ideal for a political state based upon written laws regulating the relation of classes as against the anarchy of the decayed tribal social order. In order to bring order out of chaos it was necessary to set up a depository of all power. It was the State which, according to Confucius, was the quintessence of all human relations. On the authority of the Holy Book, he maintained that the fundamental principle of human society was the subordination of the wife to the husband, of the children to the parents, and of the subject to the ruler. He set up an Emperor at the apex of his social pyramid. The cardinal doctrine of Confucian philosophy is "the nature of man makes government the greatest and most important thing in the world." By laying down this ideological foundation of the political State, Confucius not only places himself on an equal footing with Plato and Aristotle as one of the fore-runners of modern civilisation, but even anticipates Locke and Montesquieu.

It is not only on the authority of the mythological "wise king" that Confucius evolved his philosophy of the State. He reared it also upon a system of cosmology. He was not an atheist; his philosophy was not irreligious. It was evolved out of the background of natural religion just as ancient Greek idealism. The prehistoric "divine kings", after whom the head of the Confucian political State should model himself, were theocratic monarchs. Confucian political philosophy retained a large element of theocratic tradition, just as his moral codes were meant to galvanise decayed patriarchal relations. In the

Confucian State the Emperor is the High Priest, tribal chiefs and patriarchal statesmen constituting the hierarchy. The theocratic nature persisted in the Chinese State throughout history. The function of the head of the State included making periodical offerings to the Heaven, Earth, Ancestors, Confucius, Sun, Moon, the God of Rains and a whole host of other divinities familiar to all natural religions. Even in the nineteenth century, on the occasion of a great famine, the Chinese Emperor at the head of his hierarchy prayed for rain in the following words: "I, Minister of Heaven, placed over mankind and responsible for keeping the world in order, etc., etc." The head of the Confucian State was not God-appointed as in absolute monarchy, he was the Minister of Heaven. That is a theocratic conception.

Confucian cosmology is dualistic. There are two principles in nature: *Yang* and *Yi,* meaning respectively the strong and the weak, the male and the female, the heaven and the earth. The Universe represents the interplay of these two principles. The interplay is governed by fixed laws which are enigmatically set forth in the *Yi Ching* (Book of Change), as the sixty-three trigrams.[12] The resemblance with the Pythagorean numerical conception of the Universe is unmistakable. The doctrine of two principles in nature bears resemblance to the fundamental doctrine of the Sankhya system of Hindu philosophy. In all the three countries of classical civilisation—Greece, India and China—approximately at the same time, the evolution of society had reached the stage of outgrowing natural religion and producing primitive materialism and speculative philosophy. The dualistic conception of the Universe is the ideological reflex of a society split up into classes. The growth of classes with antagonistic interests creates the necessity for laws to govern the relation between them.

The basic sanction of Confucian moral and political philosophy is the assumption that the interaction of the two cosmological categories definitely establishes a set of laws by which everything in this world is governed. The mission of the wise man is to teach the people to act in harmony with those universal laws. Some superficial students of Chinese philosophy have characterised Confucius as a materialist. The basic sanction of his philosophy, however, was a metaphysical assumption. Therefore, he was an idealistic system, his philosophy was rooted in religion.

In the time of Confucius there developed tendencies towards

speculative thought which disputed the metaphysical assumptions of religion. The leader of that tendency was Lao Tze, an elder contemporary of Confucius. The tendency, however, was weak, and was overwhelmed eventually by the conservative doctrines of Confucius. The social basis of the speculative thought in ancient China was not the rising class of traders as in antique Greece. The Chinese speculative thought and mysticism were the ideological expression of the aspirations of the peasant masses tied, on the one hand, to a decayed tribal organisation and, on the other, crushed under the iron-heel of incipient feudalism. Therefore, it could not be the stimulus for primitive materialism, although it was not altogether sterile in that respect. Its main line of development, however, was in the direction of mysticism, pessimism and pacifism. The helpless victims of a decayed social order had no perspective before them. Mercilessly oppressed, completely destitute and without any hope for something better in this world, the semi-slave, semi-serf peasant masses found the only consolation in mysticism. Later they relapsed in the darkness of natural religion, the heritage of barbarism. That tendency was strengthened by the incorporation of ancestor-worship in the social institutions of Confucius. As the Confucian State was built on the basis of consanguine family groups, ancestor-worship was naturally one of its pillars. When the patriarchal family constitutes the basis of social and political organisations, its unity and continuity is preserved through the worship of the departed ancestors.

Mysticism is the ideology of a society which finds *itself* in a blind alley. Already in the classical period, agriculture had been highly developed in China. But owing to the basic fact that, in the cultivation of soil, human labour had not been supplemented by animal energy, the development of the higher forms of production had been very slow. Consequently, when in course of time the primitive agriculture was overtaxed to support a society well advanced in the early stages of civilisation, but still retaining the impediments of barbarous splendour, there had hardly appeared other forces of production to relieve it. The peasantry was, therefore, oppressed intolerably. It was restive and rebellious. But in the absence of a new class possessing higher means of production, potentially ready to create a new social order on the ruins of the old, the discontent of the oppressed masses could not find constructive expression. It degenerated into pessimism, and pessimism bred mysticism.

Material conditions encouraging pessimism and mysticism were so very ripe in the time of Confucius that he himself was affected by them in his earlier years. Strong trends of mysticism are found in the *Yi Ching* (Book of Change), which contains Confucian cosmology. But the task before the ruling class of the epoch was to deal with the realities of physical life. The established social system was breaking down. The burning problems were: How should man live? How should social relations be readjusted? How should the administration of the country be conducted? How should national economy be saved from imminent ruin? Basing himself upon an essentially religious cosmological conception, Confucius constructed a moral and political philosophy, the fundamental principle of which was that all human relations are governed by the auto-operation of an absolute Divine Will *(fen).* Chaos characterised the epoch. The established order depended, in the first place, upon the creation of a stable central authority. The conception of the *jen* provided the sanction for the required authority. Denned by Confucius as sympathy or fellow-feeling, the *jen* resulted from the inter-play of the two cosmological elements *Yang* and *Yi.* His philosophy grew out of the conditions and necessities of the time. The society was split into two classes: their inter-relation must be defined. The dissolution of society could be averted only by harmonising the relation between the elements composing it. The conception of a universal principle of fellow-feeling was evolved out of an objective necessity. Confucius maintained that the *jen* was the foundation of human society, and as such regulated all human conduct. Out of a dualistic cosmology he evolved a monistic idealism as the metaphysical sanction for his political philosophy of a unitary state to harmonise the relation between antagonistic social classes.

Confucius propounds his philosophy of a unitary central authority with the following augment: "There are no two suns in the sky; no two kings in a land; no two princes in a State; no two chiefs in a family." The inter-play of the two cosmological elements produces a universal moral principle. Correspondingly, the interplay of the two social elements (wife and husband, children and parents, subject and the ruler) also produces a third factor, which is neither the one nor the other, but regulates the relation between the two. That is the fundamental principle of the Confucian theory of state, a theory which combines barbarous theocracy, tribal patriarchy and incipient

feudalism into a federal political structure.[13]

Confucius lived down his mysticism, and asked the leaders of speculative thought: "How could we know death, when life is not yet solved? Do not trouble yourselves with things super-natural. How could we serve spiritual beings, while we do not know how to serve men?"[14] He differed from the Taoists not as regards the existence of a Supreme Being, or Divine Principle. The difference was regarding its nature. While the Taoists maintained that it was metaphysical, transcendental, Confucius held it to be moral. So, a conception of morality, derived from the metaphysical assumption of a heavenly principle, was the peculiar form that religion took in China. Several centuries after the death of its founder, Confucianism, adulterated with a vulgarised form of Buddhism, became the State religion of China. Confucius himself was included in the galaxy of divinities, and received his share of the annual offering which was one of the functions of the Chinese monarchy throughout the ages.

All the Chinese sages agree on the existence of a Supreme Being which is believed to regulate natural events and human conduct. But no Godhead is set up as the judge of human beings. There is the *Tien,* or the *Tien Ming* (Heavenly Way) which lays down the law governing all earthly phenomena. Those who violate the Heavenly Way suffer. The Heavenly Way is moral, and does not brook any contradiction to its will. That is a primitive conception of the Natural Law of the post-Renaissance European thought Nor is there any essential difference between the absolute inviolability and infallibility of the Confucian Heavenly Way and the Godhead of the great world religions.

All the great world religions, as distinct from the primitive, natural religion, originally were the ideology of the oppressed class. Taoism was the religion of ancient China in that sense. The class struggle in ancient China was the social background of the fierce antagonism between Taoism and Confucianism. That antagonism was the main feature of the intellectual life of the country for three hundred years. The historic struggle ended in the establishment of a socio-political system on the suppression of a plebeian revolt. That was a landmark in the evolution of Chinese society. That was also another weak spot in its foundation. The suppression of the plebeian revolt, however, was predetermined. While the earlier

stages of civilisation were marked by a fierce class struggle, there had not appeared in the social organism a new force sufficiently strong to lead the oppressed masses in their revolt against the decayed order. The final defeat of Taoism indicated the collapse of the plebeian revolt. Owing to the immaturity of its social basis, Taoism could not develop into a great world religion. Confucianism came victorious out of a prolonged wrestle, because it embodied both religion (recognition of a supernatural force) and an idealistic moral philosophy (ideology of the ruling class). In ancient Greece, classical idealism grew out of primitive materialism; therefore, it was revolutionary and as such was the spiritual fountain-head of all the forces of modern civilisation. In China, Confucian idealism reared itself on the background of a barbarous natural religion. Therefore, it was of a static character, and as such, preventing the dissolution of the ancient society, subsequently became the philosophy of national stagnation.

Confucius constructed his philosophical system on the assumption of an abstract principle which is the beginning and regulator of everything. The universal principle was endowed with innate goodness. The idea of goodness was the highest idea. Hence the prominence given to "humanness" and "righteousness" in the Confucian philosophy. It maintained that all is good by the heavenly law. It was a concession to the Taoists who proclaimed the doctrine of social equality on the strength of their monist conception of the Universe. By that concession, Confucius smuggled religion into his philosophy, and cut the ground under the feet of the ideologists of the plebeian revolt—the would-be founders of the abortive Chinese World Religion. That concession to monism was presently made the source of moral deduction sanctioning dualism in the social organisation. A monistic idealism, on a dualist cosmological background, became the philosophy of class domination, fortified by a unitary state.

The Confucian doctrine of the innate goodness of human nature is elaborated as follows: "The feeling of fellowship is the primary altruistic instinct of man which, in spite of his innate egoism, drives him out of his narrow selfish limitation and which seeks its own satisfaction through the negation of itself."[15] This doctrine of primitive "social contract" ostensibly was applicable to all and sundry; but just as with the theory of social contract of a later period, in

actuality, it also was a theory for its object, on the one hand, restraint of the absolutism of a decayed class and, on the other, creation of conditions for the domination of a new class. Starting from the assumption that all human relations are governed by the operation of the Heavenly Way, present in every human being as fellow-feeling, Confucius constructed his elaborate system of duties, virtues and proprieties. Applied to the ruling class, the doctrine of universal fellowship revealed its real meaning; which was subordination of one class to another, so that society could be saved from imminent dissolution. Confucius urged upon the ruling class his doctrine of fellowship and humanness with this argument: "The good emperors of old made the world peaceful, and people lived in harmony, the inferior contented under the superior."[16] Constant and continuous internecine wars were ruining the people who consequently were getting restive and rebellious, threatening the very existence of society. Peace must be established as the first condition for social reconstruction. Fellow-feeling amongst the warring princes was needed for that purpose. Harmony between the ruling class and the people, essential for the preservation and progress of society, was conditional upon the harmony amongst the princes themselves. The doctrine of fellowship, as far as the princes were concerned, was the principle of class solidarity.

The operation of the Heavenly Way teaches everybody to find his place in society and perform his duty. The duty of the princes is to establish peace. They were exhorted to do so by the example of the rulers of the Golden Age. "The ancients, who wished to spread virtue throughout the world, first set their own States in order. Wishing to rule their States well, they first regulated their families. Their States being well ruled, there was peace in the world."[17]

The patriarchal foundation of the Confucian State is clearly discernible here. Internal decomposition of the clan was the source of all social evils. The clan was the family of the prince. The position of the prince, who should be pillar of the centralised political state, could not be stabilised unless the inter-relations of the consanguine family groups composing the clan were regulated. Thus, Confucian laws inevitably hindered the growth of private property. They galvanised a decayed social system and strangulated the incipient forces of a new order. The contradiction of the Confucian laws was the reflex of the contradictions of the social conditions of the epoch.

The Confucian definition of the attitude of the middle class reveals the weakness of that class. Owing to that weakness, the middle class, which otherwise would have destroyed the old order to establish a new, fawned upon the clan chiefs. Sycophancy is a characteristic feature of the Confucian philosophy. For the conduct of the *literati,* Confucius laid down the following rules: "Not failing to treat the august master (prince) with loyalty, and the venerable (ruling class) with respect, we shall be able to make ourselves secure in our high positions."[18] The duty of the common people, according to Confucius, is "to do the necessary in every season; to do the utmost to make the land as fertile as possible; and to be frugal in their expenses."[19]

Evidently, the Confucian doctrine of fellowship does not admit of equality. Confucian fraternity is not the twin sister of equality, and tolerates only well regulated liberty. The uniform operation of the Heavenly Way is an abstract conception. In practical life, it does not imply equality. On the contrary, the difference of occupations and the resulting division of society into classes are sanctioned by it as being the nature of things. Hence the elaborate laws and regulations made to defend them are moral.

As Greece needed Solon and Draco to formulate rigorous laws of social conduct, so did China need Confucius with his moral philosophy and social codes. The country was in a great crisis. As the ideology of the downtrodden masses, Taoism was raising its ominous head. Lao Tze and his followers were preaching a dangerously disruptive philosophy. The advance of civilisation had made natural religion inadequate for satisfying the spiritual needs of society. Speculative thought was tearing down from their throne the elemental divinities set up by the ignorance of tribal society in the state of barbarism. Social relations, established on the authority of those divinities, sacerdotal and theocratic codes, were all breaking down. The speculation about the cause of the world with its sorrows and sufferings, the search for the origin of things, indicated the dissatisfaction of the people with the established order. Taoism was iconoclastic. Its basic principle as formulated by Lao Tze was: "The life is a passing episode of the eternal existence which, being absolute, is free from all inequalities."[20] The principle developed in two distinct directions: mysticism and passivity, on the one hand, and indignation and revolt against the established order, on the other.

Asserting that the phenomenal world was not real, Lao Tze concluded that: "The wise remains free and unattached in the midst of this constant change, he lives as if not living."[21] At the same time, he taught, obviously as a challenge to the Confucian doctrine of self-abnegation, that the "basic principle of conduct is to enjoy the bliss of life."[22] In either direction it was potentially dangerous. One way it spelled social dissolution; in the other it heralded a revolutionary upheaval.

Taoism was a mystic cult with a strong dose of stoicism. It was predominantly the ideology of the dissolution of a decayed social order. Ancient Chinese civilisation was on the verge of death from the disease of its birth. It lacked the vitality that is generated from the possession of progressively higher modes of production. The main source of production was sapped by the employment of a greater and greater number of men in the continuous internecine wars. On the other hand, people were deserting the land, not being able to bear the burden imposed upon them. Some of the "good kings" ploughed the field themselves to set an example to the people; and their queens spun with the same purpose. The ancient Greece with new blood in its veins stamped out the disruptive doctrine of stoicism. But classical China was swayed by Lao Tze, so dangerously near to dissolution was her social structure. Scoffing at Confucius, he preached:

"When the Great *Tao* (Supreme Divine Principle) is obliterated, we have humanness and righteousness. Prudence and circumspection appear, and we have much hypocrisy. When family relations no longer harmonise, we have filial piety and paternal love. When the country and clans decay through disorder, we have loyalty and allegiance. Abandon your saintliness, put away your prudence, and the people will gain a hundredfold. Abandon your humanness, put away your righteousness, and the people will return to filial piety and paternal love. Abandon your scheming, put away your gains, and thieves and robbers will no longer exist."[23]

But the decay and disorder were not to be remedied by letting things take their own course. Lao Tze's indignation might be righteous; but it was futile, because it did not indicate a way out of the chaos. He was not the prophet of a new order. He did not speak on behalf of a new class. He voiced the anger, despair and desolation of the oppressed masses. He was a nihilist. His philosophy was revolutionary in so far as it attacked the decayed established

order. As against him, Confucius was the defender of vested interests. But in the given situation, the one appeared as the apostle of the dissolution of a decayed civilisation, whereas the other represented the striving for reconstruction.

Voicing the sentiment of the masses, groaning under the corroded chains of patriarchal relations, Lao Tze exclaimed; "Give people as much freedom as they want; let them not be encumbered with artificial formalities and excrescent regulations; leave them alone as much as possible; and lead them to the stage of primitive innocence and absolute artlessness. This policy will secure peace and good order that prevailed before the times of cord-knotting administration."[24]

The voice of the plebs of ancient China was raised still more defiantly by Yang Tze—a younger contemporary of Lao Tze. He must have risen from the plebeian ranks, for he was not counted as a philosopher, but as an "eccentric soul disturbed by a pessimistic view of things". Probably a member of the oppressed class, he had ample reason to be pessimistic. The perspective before the distressed multitude was indeed very dark. Contact with the rude realities of the situation did not allow indulgence in detached mysticism and lofty Utopia.

Yang Tze bitterly upbraided the artificial restraint which the classical doctrines of humanness and righteousness, codified by Confucius, sought to impose upon the natural impulses of human beings. He advocated, together with Lao Tze, that everyone should be free to go in his own way. He ridiculed the Confucian doctrine that, in order to have a good reputation after death, one should torture one's life under the yoke of moral force. He exclaimed: "Desires are consuming our corporeal strength, social traditions cripple our moral simplicity, national prejudices strangle our freedom of action, and laws and regulations bridle the expansion of our natural sentiments."[25] He complained bitterly how, under such intolerable conditions, could one enjoy life. He raised the standard of open revolt by inciting disobedience against the artificial regulations restraining human activities. He scoffed at the holy men as monstrosities and cried: "Down with the doctrinaires, hypocrites, moralists and vain aspirants after fame !" His bold advocacy of freedom of thought and speech, and the bolder assertion that "sufficient food and warm clothing are the things the human beings want", were indeed revolutionary.

Yang is recorded to have had great support among the masses. Mencius, who lived more than two hundred years after Confucius and developed the political and social aspect of his philosophy, cried in alarm: "The doctrines of Yang and Mu are rampant. When the general public is not swayed by Yang, they are swayed by Mu. Yang is so egoistic as to ignore the existence of a ruler; Mu ignores the existence of the parents. But when we do away with the ruler and the parents, we shall all be beasts."[26]

As against the disruptive doctrines of the Taoist philosophers, Confucius maintained: "If right principles were in force, it would not be necessary to change the circumstances." The right principles of Confucius were federal concentration of State power and its exercise with discretion. The chaotic and rebellious conditions of the country had been produced by the cupidity of the semi-feudal clan-chiefs; a restraint upon their power was, therefore, the first requisite for any readjustment. The governmental organisation should be so as would relieve the only source of national income, namely, agriculture and put at least a part of the accumulated wealth to productive use. With this object, Confucius laid down the following principles to govern the conduct of the ruling class:

"Virtue is the root, wealth is the fruit. The ruler must at first care for his personal virtue. Has he virtue, so he has the people. Has he the people, so he has the land. Has he the land, so he has wealth. Has he wealth, so he has abundance for use. If he makes the root (virtue) his secondary, and the fruit (wealth) his primary object, he shall come in conflict with the people, and cause them to rob. Therefore, the accumulation of riches is the way to scatter people, and just distribution of wealth is the way to gather them."[27]

Confucian political philosophy is benevolent despotism. It has obtained in China throughout her history, even down to our days. No new force capable of building a new order having emerged, the crisis of the antique Chinese society could not be overcome. The remedy was found in a reformation of the old. Threatened with complete destruction, the old reformed itself, incorporating in its decayed organism the incipient germs of a more progressive system. But the germs of the new were subordinated to the moribund old. The result was a fossilised social structure.

Confucianism does not advocate equal distribution either of land or of wealth. It only proposes to limit the unproductive use of

wealth. Its principle of taxation is: Don't kill the goose that lays golden eggs. Its conception of justice would moderate the exploitation of the masses, so as to guarantee a state of contentment, so necessary to bring order out of chaos. But at the same time, it would not permit any encroachment upon the grandeur, comforts and privileges which, according to it, are the share of the ruling class.

But the social crisis was so severe and deep-seated in ancient China that the strivings for readjustment, expressed in the philosophy of Confucius, were nearly overwhelmed. Confucianism could defeat the opposing ideology of social dissolution only when, in course of time, it gave more place to the strivings of the incipient new, although even then it reserved the commanding position for the theo-patriarchal monarchy. It became the State Religion of China after it had been improved upon by Mencius more than two hundred years later. Mencius was the ideologist of primitive commodity production. He did not make any concession to the ideology of social dissolution. He lived in the fourth century B.C. By that time, the germs of a new order had grown in the organism of the Chinese society. The new forces, however, did not disrupt, but aided the old to save the Chinese society from dissolution. Mencius was the philosopher of that historic alliance.

On the other hand, the positive aspects of the teachings of Lao Tze were developed by Mu Tze, who was a contemporary of Mencius. He condemned the luxurious habits of the ruling class on the ground that they involved unproductive consumption of wealth. He also advocated abolition of the custom of costly funerals and prolonged mourning, denouncing the latter as an impediment to production, for it kept away people from work. He opposed war, for it destroyed the productive forces of the country.

Mencius formulated the theory of the division of labour, and defended the consequent class distinction as in the nature of things. He argued that some worked with the mind, and others with the muscles; the consequence of the difference in occupation was that the former ruled, and the latter were ruled. The latter must care for the nourishment and comfort of the former, who were justified in letting themselves to be so taken care of. Developing the Master's ideas, Mencius held that, for the multiplication of wealth, the number of producers must be greater than non-producers. He insisted upon diligence in production and economy in consumption. Mencius

violently attacked Mu Tze: "So long as the teachings of Mu Tze and Yang Tze are not suppressed, those of Confucius will not be made manifest. The false doctrines are deceiving people, suffocating humanness and righteousness. I solicit the preservation of the teachings of the ancient Sages. It is my desire to keep Yang and Mu in check, and to drive away their unrestrained utterances, so that the upholders of false doctrines may not raise their head again."[28]

The furious outburst of Mencius was the ideological reflex of the fierce class struggle that was shaking ancient Chinese society to its very foundation. Mencius was the prophet of the would-be modern capitalist China, which never blossomed forth in full glory, because it had the load-stone of a semi-dead past tied round its neck. Mu and Yang were the classical revolutionaries of ancient China, and as such, their teachings are the heritage of the Chinese working class. They had their eyes fixed on a distant future pregnant with immense possibilities, while their opponents were wedded to the legendary Golden Age which was to be saved by injecting new blood into its decayed veins. The class struggle in ancient China can be very well visualised in the following figurative comparison of the two contending schools of philosophy:

"One is dignified in mien, deliberate in speech and stately in movement; the other, quite opposite to this, is free and unrestricted in every way. We can mentally picture one donning a golden robe with the embroidered figures of dragon and phoenix, and sitting with all kinds of brilliant gems, and presiding over an assembly of noblemen, who reverentially bow before the august personality which is singularly tempered with humane expression. The other might be imagined as swinging himself in a rustic hammock, among luxuriant summer greens, his old, almost threadbare, dress loosely hanging about him, and with an expression, which hardly betrays a trace of earthly concern, while his eyes are rapturously raised towards a drifting cloud in the distant sky."[29]

The ideologists of the plebeian revolt in ancient China were so many fingers of history pointed to the future. The standard of revolt raised in that remote period of antiquity marked the beginning of a struggle, the history of which coincided with the entire history of China. Emperors came and emperors went; dynasties rose and dynasties fell; but the struggle continued.

Notes

1. "At the very time when men appear engaged in revolutionising things and themselves, in bringing about what never was before, at such very epochs of revolutionary crisis do they anxiously conjure up into their service the spirits of the past."—Karl Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte".

2. "The differentiation of the Semitic and Aryan families from the mass of barbarians seems to have commenced with the domestication of animals."

—Lewis Morgan, "Ancient Society", p. 22.

3. "The domestic animals supplementing human muscles with animal power contributed a new factor of the highest value. In course of time, the production of iron gave the plow an iron point, and a better spade and axe. Out of these, and the previous horticulture, came field culture: and with it, for the first time, unlimited subsistence. The plow drawn by animal power may be regarded as inaugurating a new art. Now for the first time came the thought of reducing the forest, and bringing wide fields under cultivation. Moreover, dense population in limited areas now became possible. Prior to field agriculture, it is not probable that half a million people were developed and held together under one government in any part of the earth. *If exceptions occurred, they must have resulted from pastoral life on the plains, or from horticulture improved by irrigation, under peculiar and exceptional conditions."* (Italics are mine—Author).

—Lewis Morgan, "Ancient Society", p. 26.

4. "The American aborigines in the lower status of barbarism were in possession of horticulture one entire ethnical period earlier than the inhabitants of the eastern hemisphere. It was a consequence of the unequal endowments of the two hemispheres, the eastern possessing all animals adapted to domestication, save one, and a majority of cereals; while the western had only one cereal fit for cultivation. It tended to prolong the older period of barbarism in the former, to shorten it in the latter; and with the advantage of condition in this period in favour of the American aborigines. But when the most advanced tribes in the eastern hemisphere, at the commencement of the middle-period of barbarism, had domesticated animals which gave meat and milk—their condition, without a knowledge of the cereals, was much superior to that of the American aborigines in the corresponding period, with maize and plants, but without domestic animals ....

"The absence of animals adapted to domestication in the western hemisphere and the specific differences in the cereals of the two hemispheres, exercised an important influence upon the relative advancement of their inhabitants .... In the eastern hemisphere, the domestication of animals enabled the thrifty and industrious to secure for themselves a permanent supply of animal food, the healthful and invigorating influence of which upon the race was undoubtedly remarkable. It is at least supposable that the Aryan and Semitic families owed their pre-eminent endowments to the great scale upon which, as far back as knowledge extends, they have

identified themselves with the maintainance in numbers of domestic animals."—Lewis Morgan, "Ancient Society", pp. 22 and 24.

5. Lewis Morgan, "Ancient Society", p. 26.

6. The Chinese reformer Kang Yu-wei wrote in the closing years of the nineteenth century to prove that Confucius himself composed the Classics as the background for his own teachings. He also maintained that three of the five books were interpolations by the scholars of the Han Era.

7. Confucius, '"Analects",

8. Legge, "Chinese Classics".

9. Suzuki, "History of Early Chinese Philosophy".

10. *Ibid.*

11. Confucius held that the *Tao,* defined by Lao Tze and others as the thing-in-itself—the unknown and unknowable, was the *jen* which meant something like sympathy or fellow-feeling.—Legge, "Chinese Classics".

12. Legge, "Chinese Classics".

13. A modern Chinese political writer characterises the political philosophy of Confucius as follows : "Confucius can hardly be accused of hastening revolutions by building caitles in the air. He saw that the quickest and fastest way of improving the political conditions of his people was to reinstate the method which flourished in the Golden Age of the ancient regime. First a liaison between the State and the famiiy was made. The ruler was a king-father, the mandarins parent-officials, and the people children-people. By making this liaison, he endeavoured to imbue the organisation of the State with some of the elements that made the famiiy system stable, and his attempt proved a success. If one wonders how a centralised monarchy like that of China, without constitutional limitation, could keep itself within reasonable bounds of liberalism for more than thousand years, the patriarchal element of the institution gives the answer."—Hsieh Pao-chao, "The Government of China".

14. Suzuki, "History of Chinese Philosophy".

15. "Analects".

16. *Ibid.*

17. Quoted by Wang Ching-dao in "Confucius and New China.".

18. "Analects".

19. *Ibid.*

20. Legge, "Chinese Philosophy".

21. *Ibid.*

22. Suzuki, "History of Chinese Philosophy".

23. *Ibid.*

24. *Ibid.*

25. *Ibid.*

26. *Ibid.*

27. *Ibid.*

28. *Ibid.*

29. *Ibid.*

CHAPTER II

THE STRUCTURE OF CHINESE SOCIETY

Even today the fundamental unit of Chinese society is not the individual but the family. The Revolution of 1911, and the Republican State established by it, did not alter essentially the patriarchal character of that social institution. Under the Republic, new laws were given. But social relations cannot be changed overnight through legislation so long as the economic foundations of those relations are not subverted. Under the old regime the father was the legal head of the family; by tradition he enjoyed the right to dispose of the lives of his children.[1] The Republican laws changed the position of the *Pater familias* but partially. Individual rights have been created, but the patriarchal foundation of society has not been completely destroyed. The ownership of land—the main means of production in China—still belongs to families, and even to clans. The defective form of private property in the main means of production hinders the individual from replacing the patriarchal family as the basic unit of society.

In the capitalist society family is not abolished. It continues to be the foundation of society. But its character changes. The monogamous family is essentially different from the patriarchal family; it does not push the individual to the background. It is a social institution which rises in course of the evolution of private property. Individualism is the fundamental philosophical principle of capitalism, the highest form of private property. Therefore, individualism and monogamous family are not mutually exclusive. They exist side by side, being two different branches of the same social system founded upon private property. While the monogamous family is the nucleus of bourgeois society, the individual is the corner-stone of the capitalist

State. The right of the individual is the fundamental principle of bourgeois political philosophy.

The republican form of government was introduced in China only in name. The old political order broke down. But the social relations underlying it remained intact to a large extent, resisting the strivings to build up a republican system of government. Because of its weak social foundation the Republic was eager to adjust itself to antiquated conditions. Consequently, republican laws could not go even to the extent of undermining the institution of the *paterfamilias.* They granted to the individual the right of self-defence, although not to the extent of killing. But the right is not valid in the case of an attack by an elder relative.[2] In a work on the new Chinese Penal Code, the famous jurist, Wang Chiang-hui, former Chief Justice of the Peking High Court, observes: "The Anglo-American laws lay special emphasis on the individual and not on the family, while the Continental (European) Codes have inherited something from the Roman family. The unit of the Chinese society being the family, the Reform, naturally, tries to retain this institution and modernise it as far as possible."[3]

After two thousand five hundred years the spirit of the old sage Confucius still dominates the thinkers of modern China. They long for something new; the old has become untenable: yet they try to clothe the venerable skeleton with a few selected pieces of novelty. The reformers undertake a hopeless task when they try to readjust patriarchal social relations with bourgeois political and legal institutions. The hopelessness of the task became evident during the dreary years of the futile struggle for the defence of the Republic. The "modern State", as conceived by the Chinese nationalists, is essentially Confucian. The initial period of its creation is not to be revolutionary dictatorship, but a benevolent despotism of a few persons claiming the right to educate the people with the object of "developing their ability to exercise political rights, so that a constitutional regime may be soon realised and political power delivered to the hands of the people."[4] So, according to the open admission of her "modern" rulers, China is not that kind of State in which at least theoretically the supreme political power belongs to the people composed of individuals. In the "Republic" of the Chinese nationalists, the relations are reversed; the political structure stands on its heads, so to say. The

political power and, consequently, the right of sovereignty, are monopolised by an elite, who benevolently promise to pass them on to the people in some indefinite future, when these will have qualified themselves for shouldering the responsibility. Since the self-appointed guardians reserve to themselves the right of judging when the people will have attained political maturity, it is not very likely that the promised transfer of power will ever take place. Chinese "republicanism" does not provide for a legislative body created by universal suffrage, of the kind that formally constitutes the highest organ of the bourgois democratic State. Its political ideology is determined by the patriarchal relation which still underlies the major sector of the Chinese national economy.

Unable as well as unwilling to set up a revolutionary dictatorship with the object of sweeping away all antiquated social relations, which hinder the creation of a modern democratic State, the nationalist bourgeoisie dress themselves up in the musty, threadbare, mantle of benevolent despotism, and thereby demonstrate their own impotence.

The cause of all these contradictions and peculiarities of the political life of modern China must be sought in the structure of her social system. In spite of the unreliability of the Chinese census report, it can be reasonably assumed that more than eighty-five per cent of the population live on the land. Sixty million families are engaged in agriculture.[5] Owing to this fact, the social structure of the village is the decisive factor in the life of the nation. The political life of a country is determined by the nature of, and the property right in, the prevailing means of production. Land is the main means of production in China. Therefore, the system of landownership constitutes the foundation of her social structure. And all other branches of national economy are largely influenced by the methods of cultivating land, that is to say, by the mode of production of the main industry of the country.

The system of landownership is essentially patriarchal. Not only is the land owned jointly by families, but often by family groups— clans.[6] There are villages which are populated by the members of single clans. Such villages are named after the clans. The landed property of the clan, or of families, or of individuals, is mostly derived directly from the State. It is a systam in which, theoretically speaking, private property in land does not exist, or is on a very low level

of development. But practically, the superstructure raised on this patriarchal foundation is, to a high degree, of feudal character. The charges on land are expressly feudal, not only in their essence, but often in form. However may the present system of Chinese rural economy be theoretically appraised, feudal features in the history of the evolut'on of p perty in land are unmistakable. The struggle between patriarchalism and feudalism characterised Chinese history ever since the days of Confucius. In the present form of landed property, elements of both the systems are to be found, and the overlapping of the two systems, which normally characterise different stages of social development, is the peculiar feature of Chinese society. This hybrid, produced by the two mutually exclusive social systems, was later penetrated by the mode of capitalist production.

Thus, the economic life of the Chinese village is subjected to a threefold exploitation: patriarchal, feudal and primitive-capitalist. Although large-scale feudal estates or capitalist farms are rare except in Manchuria and some of the northern provinces (Shantung and Chili), more than half of the cultivated land bears landlords' rent. The peasants cultivating the soil today are mostly either tenants or subtenants having no proprietory right in the land. The rent is not fixed, and tenancy not permanent. Only in about thirty-four per cent[7] of the land is the proprietory right of the cultivating peasant legally recognised. A considerable part of the cultivated land is the property of ancestral shrines, temples and schools. In these cases, originally the right was communal. But the traditional right has been abolished in practice. Yet, the system of administering these traditionally communal properties even now supports patriarchal relations in rural economy and politics. The village elders have usurped the proprietory right of these formerly communal lands. The peasants who cultivate these lands have been expropriated, practically if not legally. In consequence the village elders have really become landlords. But the formal continuation of communal property in a considerable part of the land invests them even now with patriarchal rights and power.

At the same time, primitive capitalism has penetrated this feudal-patriarchal structure of rural economy. The result is the continuously growing impoverishment of the peasantry and extraordinary backward-ness of the entire system of national economy. Although it is long since money has become the legal means for the payment of taxes to the Government, the rent is paid by the tenants still mostly in

kind. This system of collecting rent in kind and paying taxes in money makes traders out of the feudal-patriarchal landlords. The surplus of agriculture passes into their possession. But their essential feudal-patriarchal character prevents them from becoming capitalists. The wealth accumulated in their hand does not become productive capital; it is invested in semi-feudal landed property, which keeps national economy in backwardness. On the other hand, subjected to pre-capitalistic methods of exploitation, the peasantry cannot improve their means of production so as to grow out of their practical serfdom. Thus, in a precarious existence, the patriarchal family still coninues to be the foundation of the social superstructure.

While hereditary property in land is not legally recognised, land theoretically belonging rather to the State, rent-bearing tenancy is the outstanding feature of the agrarian relation. Approximately sixty six per cent of the cultivated land is subjected to the payment of rent to landlords.[8] So, for all practical purposes, even though not legally, private property has been created in land, because private property in land realises itself in the form of rent.[9] But the essence of this property in land is analogous neither to the *allodium* of the European middle-ages, nor the *socage* in feudal Britain, nor again *the freehold of* modern England. The right of this private property does not belong to peasants whose ancestors received the land from the Crown; it belongs to a class which received rent and, by virtue of that, has become the owner irrespective of any written law. The growth of rent-receiving private property in land transforms the peasant into a tenant; consequently, he becomes dependent on another lord in addition to the State.

The classical feudal property in land was created through the expropriation of free peasant proprietorship. But the process was not uniform. Its essence was that between the king and the people there rose a new class which, on the one hand, encroached upon the freedom and rights of the people and, on the other hand, restricted the king's prerogatives. The rise and operation of the new class were determined by the relation previously subsisting between the king and the people. The peculiar features of Chinese feudalism were determined by the fact that a rent-receiving class appropriated the ownership of land, not by robbing the right of the peasant, but thanks to the transfer of the property right by the king to the court nobles, high officials and the patriarchal heads of villages. With this type of feudalism the creation

of private property in land begins at the top of society; the rise of a land-owning class between the king and the people is not the result of expropriation, but represents the expansion of the basis of private property. The supremacy of the king is not disputed; the nobility continues to be subordinated to the monarch. Since land remains the private property of the king, who incorporates the highest power (by the grace of God, in Europe, and thanks to direct descent from Heaven, in China), theoretically he is entitled to distribute it further from time to time. This prerogative guarantees for the king undivided loyalty of the people; it provides him with the possibility of checking high concentration of land in prive possession, and, consequently, the development of a powerful nobility. The most characteristic feature of this type of feudalism, therefore, is not the serf toiling on manorial estates, but the tenant cultivating the land which practically belongs to a person standing between himself and the king, under such conditions of production as deprive him of the entire surplus in the form of rent and other charges.

In China private property in land did not grow on the basis of the right of conquest. When the Germans conquered Gaul, the king shared the right of conquest with all the members of the conquering race; that was necessary for fortifying his position in a foreign land, still full of enemies. The division of land by the king was a mere formality. In reality, each member of the conquering race simply took possession of as much land as he could cultivate. In order to secure the loyalty of his followers, the conquering king simply endorsed their action. Private property was created from the bottom. The transfer of the original private property in land, which in any case constitutes the foundation of feudalism, could not be an analogous process in the case of China, because there it started from the opposite pole of society. Because of the difference in the position of the two factors concerned, and in their mutual relation, the nature of the struggle was bound also to be different.

In China also the distribution of land by the king to the people was a mere formality, which simply sanctioned a system in force. But the substance of the system, formally sanctioned by the king in China, was fundamentally different from that in Gaul. In Gaul private property in land was created by the conquering settlers; in China land came to be cultivated by separate families, while the tradition of regarding it as public property continued. The right of the Chinese

king was not the right of conquest. It was, so to say, an organic right which could more easily claim divine origin. Since the land was not conquered with the help of the entire people, not in the historical period at any rate, there was no necessity for dividing it. The monarchy rising out of the dissolution of tribal society ultimately developed into patriarchal despotism based on that unrestricted right —of the ownership of land. Under those conditions, the peasant could have the right of cultivating land only by the grace of the Supreme Lord, and for his benefit, receiving only so much as is necessary for subsistence and reproduction. Thus, the development of private property in land invested the patriarchal monarch with feudal attributes. He was no longer the head of a free community, possessing and cultivating the Ia~d collectively. He became the Lord and Master, and the people cam; to be composed of his subjects instead of free men.

But the king could not retain for ever the primitive monopoly of feudal rights. In course of time, the rights inevitably passed on to those standing nearest to him in the social organisation. That transfer of rights was not legally sanctioned; but the rise of a feudal nobility was a fact. In consequence of its dependence on the king, this type of feudal aristocracy constitutes the foundation of that special form of State which is characterised as Asiatic despotism.

In China private property in land resulted from the decay of communal ownership and cultivation. The older system decayed; but the ruins were not swept away. Instead, they became the foundation of the new form of property which, consequently, could not grow normally to the full stature. The king distributed land to the people. But he did not transfer the right of property, which remained vested in himself. Since private property in land was created not by conquest but in consequence of the dissolution of primitive communism, the king's share in the product of agriculture assumed the character of ground rent in its most primitive form.

In that period, rent represented the entire surplus labour; it absorbed directly the whole surplus product, and, as such, corresponded completely with surplus value. Surplus value tends towards circulation. With the appearance of rent, the private property in land expanded. So long as land belongs to the State, rent and tax are identical. The administrators of State revenue gradually came to be tax-farmers; and, under the given conditions, rent being inherent in

tax, they became landlords for all practical purposes.

The peasants had no right of ownership in land; they could not be expropriated like their class in Europe. Consequently, in China serfdom did not take the classical form. The specific Chinese forms of serfdom were semi-slavery, forced labour and tenancy. The social position, characterised by those peculiar appearances, however, essentially was serfdom. For, the essence of serfdom is the obligation of the producers to cultivate land which, though in their possession, is not their property, and to deliver a part of the produce to the landlord. Whatever remains with them, after the obligations to the landlord are discharged, might provide them a little more than the necessities of bare existence and reproduction. That depends on the conditions under which their labour is performed.[10] In ancient and mediaeval China, natural conditions kept the surplus on a very low level. Often there was none. Consequently, serfdom approximated slavery, and the rise of capitalism within the limits of feudal relations was greatly restricted.[11]

The system of communal ownership and collective cultivation of land had decayed towards the end of the Chau period (400 B.C.) The germs of private property had begun to sprout. The continuous struggle of tribal chiefs had placed unbearable burden on the peasantry. They left their fields and "wandered away" for selling their labour to others who had land to cultivate.[12] Consequently, the preconditions of slavery had been created. On the other hand, a large volume of labour, finding no employment on land, had created the foundation for other industries. Production for primitive trade had begun. But the main branch of national economy was threatened with a severe crisis as the people began to leave the land. If the people could no longer be kept bound to the land, the dissolution of the established social system would be unavoidable. In that crisis appeared Confucius and later his famous disciple, Mencius, with their doctrines of social reform on the basis of a synthesis between the tottering old and the rising new.

In the midst of those chaotic conditions, the first eflFort to build a new social order was made in the kingdom of Chin (the modern province of Shensi). The kingdom was very thinly populated; but, bordering on the Mongolian pasture-lands, it possessed cattle and

other beasts of burden. So, there were conditions in which agriculture could be the source of primitive accumulation and consequently lay the foundation for further development of society. In 2iO B.C., the decayed Tsing-Tien system—tribal ownership of land—was abolished in the kingdom of Chin; the government appealed to the people of other States, in chaos and decay, to come to Chin and settle on the land which would belong to them. From the neighbouring territories, they streamed in, and before long the kingdom of Chin became very prosperous. Sale and purchase of land were allowed in Chin. Consequently, it concentrated into large estates employing many labourers who, under the conditions of the epoch, could not but be slaves. Prisoners taken in wars waged on the west were also employed on land as slaves. Not only did agriculture prosper; the surplus of the main branch of economy stimulated the growth of handicraft and trade. The rest of the country was in decay and disorder; therefore trade found its way to foreign lands. Routes of caravan trade with Central Asia and Persia were opened. Out of that advantageous position rose the guild of Shensi merchants which for centuries, until today, played a leading part in the foreign trade of China.

Having consolidated its position at home, the Chin Dynasty became the ruler of the entire country. After nine hundred years' existence, the classical regime of the Chau Dynasty collapsed like a house of cards. The people enthusiastically welcomed the new dynasty which had brought about such prosperous conditions in its original territory. But a decree of Chin Emperor, the Tsing-Tien system was abolished throughout the country. He ordered the destruction of the works of Confucius and his disciples. He subjugated the rulers of other States and united the country under one centralised despotism. Far off territories, like Tonking, Cochin, China, Burma and even Central Asia were incorporated in the Chinese Empire which, during the reign of the Chin Dynasty, embraced more than three million square miles. It was during the reign of the Chins that the Great Wall of China was built to protect the country against the invasion of the barbarians from the north and the west. The country was divided into thirty-six provinces which were governed by officials appointed by the Emperor. An Empire like the Roman was built up. Roads were constructed, canals dug, not only for the movement of armies, but also for the expansion of trade. The short period of the reign of the

Chin Dynasty can claim to be the proverbial Golden Age of China.

But the Chins raised their imperial structure too rapidly on a loose foundation. Unlike the Romans, they received little tribute from the conquered provinces. Territories outside China were conquered only in name. The Chinese power was not sufficiently consolidated to exact tribute from there. The Chins acquired an Empire which was economically exhausted and politically disrupted. The only bright spot was their original kingdom. Revolutionary measures, so successfully introduced there, could not be applied easily to the rest of the country where the conditions were not nearly so favourable. The net consequence of the short period of their reign was extraordinary burden on the people. In addition to heavy taxation, yet another restriction was imposed upon production. Hundreds of thousands of people were employed for the construction of the Great Wall, as well as roads, canals and palaces. The influx of slave labour from abroad was not nearly so copious as in the case of Greece and Rome. Foreign territories conquered were not extensive enough. Labour necessary for the gigantic construction could be found only by withdrawing it from agriculture. Consequently, the main branch of economy was nearly ruined. Owing to the absence, at any rate great shortage, of the beasts of burden, practically the entire social labour had to be applied to the cultivation of land, if this was to produce some surplus over and above what was necessary for the maintenance and reproduction of the people. Exhausted agriculture was heavily taxed in order to cover the cost of imperial constructions. It is recorded that the Emperor's share in the produce of the land was increased by several times, and, in addition, an equally high pell-tax was levied. For the purpose of disarming the people during the great unrest under the Chau Dynasty, the production of iron and possession of horses had been reserved to the State. Chin Chi-huangti made the monopoly of the indispensable war materials still more severe. He increased the tax on iron to twenty per cent.[13]

Owing to the insufficiency of slave labour, the Chin rulers introduced the system of forced labour for public works. Their army was of half a million. In the construction of the Great Wall alone, four hundred thousand men were employed. Another seven hundred thousand were employed in the construction of palaces, roads, canals, etc.[1]* Altogether, more than a million and a half workers were withdrawn from production, and the constructions in which they were

employed cost large amounts of money, raised by increasing taxes. In those days, the total population of the country was hardly twenty millions. Thus, about twenty-five per cent of all the adults, including males and females, were taken out of production. The result was a great catastrophe which was inevitable. "Men worked hard on large farming estates, and yet did not have enough to eat. Women span, and yet could not clothe themselves properly. Therefore, the people were fed up with the Chin Dynasty, and rose in revolt against it.[15]

The mighty Chin Dynasty was overthrown by a peasant revolt led by Chen Shen, himself a peasant. Very little is recorded about that Spartacus of ancient China. Only one chapter in the Book of Han deals with him. The exploited peasantry in those backward days were even less capable of building a new social order than they are today. Therefore, the rebellion overthrew the despotism of the Chins, but could not replace it by a better system. The country was plunged into a period of chaos and disorder, out of which feudalism grew. The fall of the Chin Dynasty occupies in Chinese history a place analogous to that of the dissolution of the Roman Empire in the annals of Europe. It closed the classical period, and opened up the feudal middle-age.

The small States subjugated by the Chins joined the rebellion; upon the fall of the Empire, they regained their position as independent feudal principalities. After the short respite of only half a century, the country again became the scene of civil wars amongst feudal princes lighting for supremacy. "The people lost work, and there was a severe famine. They ate human flesh, and more than half the population perished."[16]

Out of that dark background rose the new Dynasty of the Hans. But it also could not ease the situation for any length of time. The preconditions for the rise of feudalism had been created by the abolition of tribal ownership of land—the Tsing Tien system. But owing to its narrow basis, the birth-pangs of the new order were unusually severe and protracted. The sufficiency of surplus product remained the fundamental cause of all difficulties. The product of agriculture, which was carried on almost exclusively with human labour, was hardly enough to meet the barest needs of society. The economic equilibrium was so unstable that it was dangerously dislocated by the slightest disturbance of normal conditions. Every war

and every famine created a terrible economic crisis. Famine reduced the number of mouths to be fed, but the productive power of the nation was also reduced proportionately. And thanks to the ceprice of Mother Wang-ho, the ancient home of the Chinese was so often devastated by floods, that famine was rather the rule than an exception in the economic history of the country.

The first signs of production for sale were to be noticed towards the end of the Chau period (400 B.C.). The tribal chiefs levied taxes on commodities which were brought to the markets, or transported across their borders. When Mencius advised the abolition of that burden on handicraft, the king replied: "I can not manage with the tenth of the product of the land. I can not abolish the border and market taxes."[17] Later, trade was altogether forbidden by the State. In the literature of ancient China, there are volumes of laws restricting the freedom of the people to dispose of their goods at their own will.[18] Even as late as the middle of the nineteenth century, the Government frowned upon trade, and traders were looked down upon. Heavy taxes were imposed on trade, and the methods applied for the collection of those taxes corrupted the entire administrative machinery.

When the Han Dynasty rose out of the chaos which had followed the dissolution of the Chin Empire, the country was completely exhausted. There was no reserve. Cannibalism, let loose by the chronic insufficiency of normal foodstuffs, further decimated the labour power of the country. Land abandoned by tb,e hungry and destitute masses, was seized by others who, in course of time, became feudal lords. But the creation of large landed estates did not increase production. There was great scarcity of labour for the cultivation of land. It is recorded that towards the end of the Han Dynasty (300 A.D.), the population was reduced by thirty per cent.[19] The situation, indeed, facilitated the concentration of landed property, so that feudal ownership could grow, but at the same time, it was unfavourable to the rise of serfdom. The landlords appropriated as their share as much as half the produce of the land. That drove the peasants away from the land, and sharpened the economic crisis.

Continuous agrarian crisis, nevertheless, contributed to the development of handicrafts. As a measure against famine, the first Han Emperor legalised slavery. Parents were allowed to sell their children for bread. Children thus sold grew up as slaves. On the

basis of slave labour, handicrafts developed notwithstanding high taxes and other burdens. The general situation, however, hardly improved. A minister of the Emperor Wen-ti exclaimed in wonder: "The surveyed land is not less today, and the number of people has not grown bigger than before. We should have greater surplus than in the olden days." He came to the conclusion that the contradiction resulted from the fact that more people were engaged in subsidiary occupations, and therefore agriculture was suffering.[20] But flight from the land continued. It became so bad in the beginning of the Christian era that a contemporary scholar-statesman, Chia Yi, sounded the alarm: "We must bring the people back to the land, and insist that workers and artisans of all sorts should return to the labour on land so that everybody can live on his own labour. Then there will be enough saving, and everybody will be happy and satisfied."[21] For encouraging the people to return to the land, the Emperor himself ploughed the garden of his palace and planted mulberry trees. Scholars of the classical school thundered against the concentration of land in feudal estates. Many plans were made to restrict their size. An edict of Emperor of Ei-ti set the limit at 3000 *mus*[22] of land, and 200 slaves. The feudal lords were growing too powerful; further growth of their power must be checked by the Emperor. The entire middle-age of Chinese history was characterised by the struggle between the Emperor and the landowning nobility.

Side by side with feudalism, there grew, out of the dissolution of the old order, yet another social force which was still more dangerous for despotism; it was the trading class. The social character of the produce of agriculture was changed by the concentration of land in great estates, cultivated by slaves and serfs. A considerable part of the produce of primitive agriculture became commodity. The new class a traders appeared between the producer and the consumer. Through the control of the exchange of commodities, the traders accumulated great wealth.

The ruling class naturally hated the traders. Abuse against them was the main theme of contemporary literature. Chao Chor, a famous statesman of the Han period, contrasted the prosperity of the traders with the misery of the peasants. He wrote: ' The merchants are richly and artistically dressed; they live luxuriously; they travel thousands of *li* on horseback, exercise great influence over dukes and princes."[23] Chao and others maintained that the trades people were bound to

grow stronger and stronger, so long as the masses wandered away from the land.

The people had been liberated from land by the abolition of the Tsing Tien system, which bound the peasant to the soil with the chains of blood relationships of the patriarchal family. When the oppression of the monarch and feudal lords became intolerable, the people could leave the land, so sell their labour power to those who would pay for their subsistence. Human labour, freed from the obligation of cultivating land, contributed to the growth of other forms of production. But these were not yet sufficiently expanded to meet the financial requirements of the State, which, as a matter of fact, derived little income from them. The surplus of the new forms of production accumulated in the possession of the traders. They were friendly with the nobles who participated in the profit. All the contemporary scholars, therefore, maintained that, for the financial stability of the State, the people should be brought back to the land, and recommended that taxes should be reduced for the purpose. Some of them went so far as to advocate the restoration of the Tsing Tien system.

In spite of all the efforts of the Han Emperors to limit the size of feudal domains, these kept growing at the cost of the tiller of the soil, who, upon the abolition of the Tsing Tien system, had become owners of the land. Once created, private property has the tendency of accumulating in fewer and fewer hands. The exploitation of the peasants increased. Finally, a new blow once again disturbed the precarious balance of national economy established after decades of disorder. In the midst of that new crisis, the Emperor Wang Mang restored the Tsing Tien system as the panacea for all evils. Not only the feudal lords but also the peasants resisted that reactionary step. Wang Mang was overthrown. The Han Dynasty was reinstated. Feudalism had come to stay.

Private property in land had become too deep-rooted to be abolished by an imperial decree. Although a reactionary measure, the restoration of the Tsing Tien system, however, was quite plausible. The princess of Han Dynasty and their tributary nobles had taken possession of the entire land. The peasants had become free owners of the land they cultivated only to be expropriated. They no longer possessed any land; they cultivated it as tenants, and paid the lords with half the produce. Many laboured as slaves for bare subsistence

on the estates of the lords. Nevertheless, before long, Wang Mang was forced to amend his plan so as only to restrict the feudal domains, just as the Hans had tried to do formerly. But reinforced feudalism would not have its power curtailed, and tolerate any encroachment on its privileges. Therefore, the feudal lords overthrew the usurper, even after he had withdrawn the decree abolishing private property in favour of the decayed system of tribal ownership.

During the second Han period feudalism further expanded. In that period, the trade with West-Asia, established previously by the Shensi merchants, reached the Mediterranean. Material welfare gave anew impetus to the spiritual life of the nation. Scholars visited India, and Buddhism was officially introduced in China. But before long, triumphant feudalism came into conflict with handicraft and trade, which contributed so much to the material welfare and spiritual re-birth of the nation. The growth of handicraft attracted labour from the land. In the long run, that process weakened national economy rather than strengthened it. The production of food-grains declined. On the other hand, manufacturing industry did not develop enough to produce for export, so that necessary food-grains could be purchased abroad. One crop destroyed by flood, and the perennial scarcity of foodstuff became a dreadful famine. The country was plunged into a new period of political unrest.

During the period of unrest, the feudal princes took to the war path. In their struggle for supremacy, the country was divided into three kingdoms engaged in mutual hostilities. The weakened Han Dynasty went down in the chaos. During the centuries (200-588 A.D.) between the fall of the Han Dynasty and the re-union of the country under Northern Chows of barbarian descent, China experienced the darkest period of her history. Bloody wars, barbarian invasions, famine and depopulation were the characteristic features of that period. Flying before the barbarian invaders, the Chinese left their original home and emigrated *en masse* over the Yangtse to the South. They left the Northern home, which had been devastated by periodical overflows of the Yellow River, depopulated by recurring famines, and finally overrun by barbarian invasions. In the new territories of the South, they relapsed into the classical social order of patriarchal landownership. That was a reaction to the fearful experience of the period of feudal anarchy.

Since those remote days, the social structure of Southern China

has differed from that in the North. The foundation of the difference is the uneven development of private property in land and the divergent forms of social relations resulting therefrom. The mass emigration from the North created such an over-population in the South as prevented the rise of large feudal domains, although it could not altogether hinder the concentration of landed property. But the size of rent-bearing estates, leased out to tenants, was very much circumscribed by the conditions of the country. In the North, on the contrary, depopulation caused the rise not only of large feudal estates, but also of peasant farms of relatively considerable size.

The mass emigration left large feudal estates in the North not only without enough people to cultivate them, but also without owners. The landlords also had been killed off either in the civil wars or by the barbarian invaders. The barbarian conquerors from the North settled the wandering people on those extensive territories without clearly defining the relation of property. A sort of allodial property was created by that settlement. It eventually developed into peasant proprietorship, which is found more frequently in the North than in the South. The decisive factor was the kind of the settlers. They were not members of the conquering race which remained attached to the military profession; they were native Chinese. Consequently, their property right was not secure; it was not derived from the right of conquest. In course of time, many of the settlers quietly reverted to patriarchal relations. Consequently, in the North, there developed side by side two forms of property in land; they exist even today.

When in the sixteenth century the country was re-united under the Northern Chows, the barbarian conquerors left intact the division of land introduced in the South by the Chinese emigrants. Nevertheless, the concentration of land continued, partly as the inevitable consequence of objective conditions, and partly through the interference of the king who wanted to establish his sovereignty. Finally, the next native Chinese dynasty of the Tangs introduced a system of taxation which tacitly legalised the position of the landlord. According to the new system, tax was to be determined by the size of the landed property and its produce. Formerly, the share of the State was taken from the family which, theoretically, was obliged to cultivate a given piece of land in order to render a certain amount of service to the king. Every member of the family—man, woman and

child—was counted as a head to be taxed. The doctrine underlying the old system of taxation was that the entire land, as the domain of the king, was equally distributed to the people, grouped in families which cultivated the soil, partly for their own subsistence and partly for the king. The concentration of land in large estates showed that the patriarchal relation of property had decayed. While the king still remained the sole legal owner of land, there had arisen a class which challenged the right reserved to him, namely, the monopoly of the property in land. The new system of taxation introduced by the Tang Dynasty legalised the conditions already in existence. Inasmuch as it legally freed the peasantry from the worn-out patriarchal bondage to the land, it facilitated the transfer of property in land. Whoever could not pay the taxes, needed no longer to stick to the land and starve. He could give up the iand, which passed on to the possession of the landlords. They either allowed the landless peasants to labour on their estates as half-slaves, half-serfs, or leased out the land to those who could pay the rent.

Under the new system, the burden on the peasants doubled; they had to pay the tax to the Govenment and rent to the landlords. It is immaterial whether the tax levied by the State still retained the character of primitive rent. Perhaps it did, and hence the ambiguity of the legal position of landed property in China. On the other hand, the owners of large landed estates, who leased out their land to the peasants, embodied together the modern semi-capitalist tax-farmer as well as the mediaeval feudal lord. In any case, the growth of the system of land leased out by rent-receiving lords represented the destruction of royal monopoly of the property in land. The monopoly was no longer absolute, because the State must share it with a class which had smuggled itself between the king and the peasantry.

As long as the land belonged only to the king, the peasant, indeed, was not an allodial owner. But nor was he a tenant holding the land in dependence on another person. He was a subject of the king, and cultivated the land practically for himself, so long as he delivered the king's share. The theory of royal ownership and equal distribution of land does not permit anybody to be driven out of land on some pretext. For, a strong tradition of primitive communism is incorporated in this theory, which is the ideology of social relations growing directly out of the dissolution of the tribal organi-

sation. In contrast to that, tenancy is a very clearly defined and definitely limited right. It is connected with continued possession only when that is expressly provided in law. And that was never the case in China. It is not so even today. As a matter of fact, the tenant is always a tenant-at-will.[24]

Favoured by the system of taxation, feudalism devastated the land. Peasants left the exhausted land, from which they could hardly eke out the barest subsistence. Unrestricted feudalism ruined national economy. The Sung Dynasty, which followed the Tang, again took up the struggle for limiting feudal possessions, and introduced the so-called "Modified Tsing Tien" system. The system of family-ownership was restored inasmuch as taxes were levied on heads as well as on the produce of land. But the peasant was no longer obliged to labour on the communal land for a specified time, in order to pay the share of the king. Now he was legally the possessor of his entire labour power, a part of which was, of course, to be devoted for the production of the surplus necessary for meeting the tax obligations. So, the patriarchal forms of social relations were associated with feudal exploitation in such a way as would hinder the expansion of feudal landed property. At last, the "Ideal State" of Confucius

was realised.

After centuries of bitter struggle, despotic monarchy triumphed over feudal ambition. In course of the struggle, the claims had been so modified from either side that it was finally possible to establish the permanent alliance of both as advocated by the Old Saga. The relation of property in land, established during the reign of the Sung Dynasty, not only remained in force up to the revolution of 1911, but continued essentially even under the Republic when the patriachal-feudal conditions were superimposed by the methods of capitalist exploitation. Consequently, there came into existence a social structure which could not be shaken except by destroying all the three elements entering into its being. The peculiarity of this fossilised social structure is the *de facto* existence and operation of private property in land which is not i ecognised fully by law. Many errors regarding the relation of classes in modern China result from this peculiarity.

Had Chinese society not attained the stage of feudalism, its breakdown would have been inevitable. It did reach there but with such a heavy ballast inherited from the past as made the transition to

the next higher stage a long and laborious process. Notwithstanding the immaturity of feudalism, Chinese society came to be subordinated to capitalist relations which, in their turn, were restricted by surviving feudal conditions. Owing to these overlapping processes of evolution, the present structure of Chinese society is so complex that its lost equilibrium cannot be restored through the revival of old relations and principles, indeed, not even by such a revolution as would leave its foundation of private property intact.

The system of family-ownership pf land, with tax representing a part of the produce payable to the State, and with the property in land theoretically still belonging to the State—that unmistakably is a remnant of patriarchal relations. The form of taxation however is clearly feudal. The State theoretically still being the supreme landlord, ground-rent coincides with tax. There exists private property in land, only it is reserved to the State. But given private property, its transfer from one hand to another cannot be prevented. So, even when the system of the distribution of land by the State was re-introduced, as under the Sung Dynasty, the process of concentration continued.

Finally, primitive forms of capitalist production grew out of the background of those agarian relations. Already in the beginning of the nineteenth century, the old stratification of the Chinese society was disturbed. The gradation was no longer as it had been previously, namely, the scholars, the peasantry, the artisans and the traders. But then, the merchants and the bankers had climbed up the social ladder, having been granted the place just below the scholars.[25] Moreover, the peasants had been relegated to the lowest rank, the artisans having superceded them. The relation of property in land was naturally affected by the growth of the capitalist mode of production which was reflected in those dislocations hi social gradation. The legally established State-ownership of land was undermined by the practically existing private property. Agrarian produce had come under the laws of commodity production. The peasants now could be driven out of the land which accumulated in the possession of the capitalists. In the Srst half of the nineteenth century, the scholars were often bankers, and most probably they had always owned land.[26]

There is enough evidence to the effect that the feudal nobility thrived rich and mighty during the Sung and Ming periods, when legally and theoretically the system of distribution of land by the

State was in force. The state of affairs was not materially changed during the short intervening period of Mongol invasion. The Ming Emperors were engaged in a hopeless struggle against the noble "land-grabbers."[27] At the end of the Ming era, feudal estates were often larger then one million *mu.* Moreover, those domains included the largest part of the cultivated land of the entire country. The Manchus confiscated the possessions of the Chinese nobles. The confiscated land was handed over by the conquering dynasty to its soldiers and the eight tributary Tartar clans. The latter were residents in Peking. They leased out their possessions to the peasants. Even the soldiers received more land than they could cultivate. A part of their land, therefore, was also leased out. Consequently, tenancy came to be the characteristic feature of the agrarian relations of modern China. About eighty per cent of the peasantry are tenants[28] holding the land either from the State or from private owners, under conditions which, in essence and often also in form, are feudal.

Until the seventeenth century, tax was levied ruthlessly per capita. In course of time, that uneconomic system of taxation came in conflict with incipient capitalism. In 1713, the head-tax was replaced by land-tax as the main source of State revenue. From that time on, the object of taxation was no longer the individual, regarded as a chattel in possession of the ruling class; tax became a charge on labour-power as commodity. The new tax was called *ti-ting,* which means, land and head-tax. That part of the composite tax which represented a charge on agricultural income, itself included all sorts of feudal levies. In addition, there was the payment made instead of obligatory labour; transit tax; the payment for securing release from military service, and the extra tax levied for covering the deficit which often resulted when taxes were paid in kind.[29] The lot of the tenants who held their land on lease from private owners was still worse. Besides the payments they bad to make to the State through the landlords and local officials, the latter themselves levied still other charges which were indefinite and unlimited.[30]

The system of taxation represents pre-capitalist exploitation of the peasantry; even today it is largely in force. The entire surplus is taken away from the producer, and consequently he is deprived of the means to improve the methods of production. This form of exploitation has lowered the standard of living of the majority of the peasantry below the starvation limit. This ex traordinary poverty of

the bulk of the population is the fundamental cause of China's backwardness The accumulation of capital is circumscribed by the narrow margin of surplus which, consequently, hinders economic development.

According to the latest estimates, the minimum necessity of a family of five members could be covered by the produce of 4.7 acres of wheat-growing land in the North, or 1.7 acre of rice-growing land in the South. But 33 per cent of the peasant farms are on the average less than one acre each; another 35 per cent less than 1.5 acres.[31] Thus, 68 per cent of the entire agricultural population live below the lowest level of subsistence. An investigation in four typical provinces led to the conclusion that the average annual income of 60 per cent of all peasant families is 150 silver dollars or even less.[32] In the opinion of the specialists of the Peking Medical College, the indispensable necessities of an average peasant family cannot be had for less than 185 dollars a year. The items of necessity taken into account are food (without meat, fish or eggs), 150 dollars; clothing, 20 dollars; rent, light, medicaments, recreation, etc., 15 dollars.

In 1918 (the last year for which some statistical materials are available), about 1500 million *mu* of land was under cultivation, employing about sixty million families.[33] If the land was equally distributed, the share of each family would be 25 *mu.* But in reality, the average holding of sixty-eight per cent of those sixty million peasant families is much smaller than the minimum required to produce their barest subsistence. About fifty million peasant families hold approximately 300 million *mu,* that is about one fifth of the entire cultivated area. Making allowance for the insufficiency of the statistical material, it can be concluded that by far the greater part of the cultivated land is in the passession of a small rent-receiving minority. Large landed estates are to be found even outside Manchuria and the Northern provinces. For example, in the maritime province of Kiangsu, there are landed estates as large as 300 thousand to 400 thousand *mu.* Smaller ones of the size of 30 to 40 thousand *mu* are very common.[34] In view of the extraordinary small-ness of the average peasant farm, the possession of a few hundred *mu* constitutes landlordship, and a considerable part of the cultivated land is in the possession of such petty landlords.

The landlords who still enjoy feudal rights and patriarchal privileges also participate largely in capitalist exploitation. For

example, a family possessing 400,000 *mu* of land in the neighbouring province of Kiangsu, also has extensive trading and financial interests in Shanghai. It is the owner of the China Steam Navigation Company—a modern capitalist concern. And that is not an exception. Throughout the country, the landlords are also capitalists. They are all engaged in some trade or other, mostly in agricultural produce which they take over from the peasantry. The feudal-patriarchal relations serve the purpose of primitive capitalist accumulation.

In China, the transition from the feudal to the capitalist mode of production does not take place in the form of the process of the producer becoming a trader—a capitalist;[35] it takes place rather from the opposite direction—traders not connected with the process of production first appear as the medium for the circulation of commodities, and later interfere in the process of production itself. This latter process, which obstructs free economic development, could be observed also in the earlier stages of capitalist development in Europe. It operated in certain industries of England and France until the middle of the nineteenth century. The difference is that China did not have the possibility of breaking the chain by which trade-capital circumscribes the growth of the capitalist mode of production. Foreign intervention reinforced the position of the primitive capitalist traders of China who operated on the basis of feudal relations. The product of the labour of Chinese peasants could come to the world market only through the intermediary of those traders. Chinese agriculture thus came to be subjected to two forms of exploitation: the capitalist mode of production was deprived of the possibility of growing within the limits of the semi-feudal, semi-capitalist relations.

The characteristic feature of feudal economy is that the larger part of the surplus product of social labour is appropriated by the ruling class not for reinvestment in the process of production, but to be devoted to unproductive, parasitic purposes. A higher mode of production can grow within the framework of feudal relations, when an increasing part of the surplus produce remains with the producer, thus enabling him to improve his means of production. Therefore, when production is not directly connected with land, that is, in the case of manufacture, feudal restrictions upon free exchange of commodities a re still more rigorous. In course of the struggle, taking place for several centuries and covering a whole historical period—

the middle-age—the productive forces, finally, break the cramping bonds of feudalism and blossom forth in the capitalist social order. The duration and result of this historical struggle depends on the magnitude of the surplus that can be produced in the process of production still within the limits and under the restrictions of feudalism.

Under feudal conditions, the peasant works either as a free producer, a direct subject of the king, or as a serf on the feudal domain; the product of his labour, over and above what is necessary for his barest subsistence, is taken away from him in the form of rent, tax or other feudal levies. The specific feature of feudalism is that the surplus value is realised directly through the appropriation of the entire surplus product. The production of surplus value becomes the foundation of the capitalist mode of production only when a part of the surplus is absorbed as profit, when surplus value is no longer realised in the simple form of direct appropriation of the entire surplus produce. Then the entire surplus product of social labour ceases to be the monopoly of the feudal landlord. Profit represents a loss for the landlord, whether the State or the feudal noble. There begins the struggle for the division of the surplus value.

When, under the given conditions of production, a relatively large surplus is produced, the share absorbed by profit is correspondingly large, and consequently, a broad foundation is laid for the rising capitalist mode oL production.[36]

The extraordinary insufficiency of the surplus produce of agriculture retarded the development of Chinese society. The main concern in China always was to have enough rice—the staple foodstuff. The measure of good government was the ability to keep a reserve of rice for bad days. The product of the entire social labour was hardly enough to ensure the subsistence and reproduction of the immediate producers. That is to say, the entire labour power was virtually socially necessary labour. The surplus labour, which could be performed in the normal process of production, was very narrowly limited by the conditions of production. The slow development of private property in China was caused by those peculiar conditions of production; under those conditions, surplus produce did not represent normally performed surplus labour, but forced labour. In other words, a part of the socially necessary labour had to be applied to overcome the natural restrictions on surplus production. The result

was extreme poverty of the masses, and permanent unstability of the national economy. The most characteristic features of the situation were recurring famines and civil wars which, in their turn, often destroyed the larger part of the population.

The fluctuation of population is a remarkable feature of Chinese history. In the first Han Period, feudalism prospered under the orderly conditions reestablished after the chaos which followed the defeat of the Chin Revolution. The population rose to sixty millions. During the following period of Wang Mang reaction, it fell to twenty-one million, and rose again to fifty million towards the end of the second Han period. During the civil wars of the third century A.D. the population sank to the record depth of eight millions. In the next century, it gradually went up to sixteen millions, and later to forty-six millions in course of several hundred years. In the tenth century, during the reign of the Sung Dynasty, the population again fell to twenty-one million. After a steady rise up to forty-five millions, it suddenly went down again to thirteen millions in a few decades. From the thirteenth to the seventeenth century, the population remained relatively stable; the fluctuation was within a few millions; the general tendency was upwards. During the years of the downfall of the Ming Dynasty, it again declined to twenty-one million. After the establishment of the Manchu rule, there was no backward movement of population.[37] Historical investigation reveals the fact that the periodical decline of population was always caused by famine, which again either followed or preceded a civil war.

These figures, deduced from a large mass of historical material, prove the thing. Until the eighteenth century, the level of production in China was so low as did not ensure even the most minimum means of subsistence for the immediate producers themselves. The land was fertile; but devastating floods rendered large areas unworthy of cultivation for long periods. And behind the tragic scene, there always remained the fundamental weakness of the Chinese civilisation.

The scarcity of the beasts of burden in the North, and their absence in the South, created conditions in which virtually the entire labour time had to be employed for the production of the means for the barest subsistence of the people. The situation was further aggravated by the fact that in the olden days, it was a State monopoly to use horses and oxen for military purpose. Therefore, agriculture

was not only dependent mainly on human labour; the absence of cattle also diminished the fertility of land. Even today, in the South, cattle is rarely employed in agriculture. Milk, butter and cheese are things seldom to be found on the Chinese table.[38] The dependence of agriculture exclusively on human labour strengthened the position of the patriarchal family. The absolute right of the father over the children was recognised by law, in order to prevent the young people from wandering away from land.[39]

The structure of the present-day Chinese society is the result of the conditions of production which prevailed in the earlier stages of its development. The conditions were not favourable for accumulation. For a long time, right up to the eighteenth century, normal production left a very narrow surplus. The part of the produce of social labour absorbed by pre-capitalist rent, taxes levied by the despotic State, and feudal charges, was not surplus product; it represented very largely forced labour. Finally, there developed primitive capitalism on the basis of the exploitation of intensified forced labour.

One of the causes of antagonism between capitalism and feudalism is that capitalist profit encroaches upon the feudal landlord's rent. That is specially the case when the pre-capitalist land rent directly represents the entire surplus produce. Since primitive capitalism grew in China as a social factor necessarily connected with feudal relations, it was not absolutely antagonistic to the old mode of production. It only placed a new burden on the process of production already so very heavily encumbered. In mediaeval China, nascent capitalism was inseparably dependent on the feudal mode of production. It is so even today. In the beginning of the capitalist development in Europe also, this was characteristic of trades capital. The oriental market, discovery of America, influx of precious metals from Mexico, and the plunder of India opened a new way before European capitalism which, consequently, could free itself from the bondage of feudalism, and the bourgeoisie only thereafter began the decisive struggle for political power. The pioneers of the Chinese bourgeoisie found themselves in a different situation; therefore, they could not travel the way of their more fortunate European compeers, and before long became helpless victims of plundering invaders.

The collection and transport of the Government's share in the product of agriculture stimulated the growth of trades capital in

China. In the fifteenth century, a part of the taxes was paid in money, at least formally.[40] But by far the greater part of the State revenue was collected then and later in kind. That is done even today; and since even today a large part of the tribute, taken in the form of rent or taxes, represents forced labour, the product of this forced labour should be taken away from the producer somehow as early as possible; that is to say, immediately upon the harvesting of the crops. Should time be allowed for the crops to be transformed into money, one would always run the risk of their being consumed at least partially. Always there is a great hole to be filled up. Therefore, the Government must collect the largest part of the revenue in kind as soon as the harvest is over, if it wants to secure what, in its opinion, is its share. Then, there is the antagonism between the State officials, who usually are also landlords and big merchants, on the one hand, and petty traders, on the other. Thanks to the system of payment of taxes in kind. State officials make a threefold profit: firstly, from the monopoly of the grain trade which they exercise through that system; secondly, from the transport of a part of the grains collected in payment of taxes to the provincial and national capitals, thirdly, from the exchange of the rest for money. Through this system, the feudal officials dominate the entire economic life of the nation, and they do so in the interest of trades capital.[41] Payment of taxes in money would place the small traders in the position to break the feudal-capitalist monopoly. They would have the possibility of buying the grain directly from the small peasantry.

Since 1919, there is no Central Government for the entire country. Therefore, the budget of the Peking Government has no real significance. In the earlier years of the Republic, the situation was hardly any better. Yet, in the absence of more adequate and reliable information, the budget of that period can be taken for an approximate representation of the situation. In that, no less than sixty per cent of the State revenue is derived from taxes which are delivered to the monopoly of the reactionary feudal-capitalist alliance. With the exception of the salt tax, practically all the other items of taxation fall directly or indirectly on agriculture, and are- paid largely in kind.

Economic backwardness has hindered the development of the modern means of transport, with the exception of the modest beginnings made primarily for the urgent necessities of imperialist trade.

The result of this backwardness of the means of transportation is the territorial splitting of the natural economy which again hinders the rise of a modern centralised State. The country is divided into a number of isolated local markets monopolised by land-owning and trading State officials. Thanks to the penetration of Imperialism, these isolated markets, while still founded on semi-feudal production, have become connected with the world market. The semi-feudal agrarian production has been drawn into the sphere of the most modern capitalist exploitation. Finally, out of this process, there has arisen a class which tries to introduce real capitalist mode of production in China's national economy. In consequence of the rise of the modern bourgeoisie, the social structure of urban areas stands in sharp antagonism to the rest of the country which still remains under feudal-patriarchal domination. But the bourgeoisie, though they possess modern means of production in the cities, cannot give a revolutionary expression to the antagonism between the capitalist city and the feudal village. Because they themselves are still rooted in the economy of the village with which they are connected as the intermediary between the world market and the internal markets of China. This contradiction, inherent in the very existence of the Chinese bourgeoisie, is the fundamental problem of modern China. As this problem results historically from the social structure of the country, its solution can be found only in the complete subversion of the established social order as a whole.

The feudal-patriarchal property in land is overburdened by capitalist exploitation. The larger part of the accumulation taking place therefrom, flows out of the country as imperialist tribute. The result of a fossilised social system, embracing simultaneously manifold social relations which appeared successively ever since the dawn of civilisation. They are grown into, and overlap, each other. Consequently, one of them cannot replace the others, even when it represents a progressive tendency. Capitalism, for example, cannot destroy the feudal relations without undermining its own foundation. That has been proved by the events since the Revolution of 1911, and specially since the rise of the Nationalist Government of Canton. The reconstruction of the Chinese society cannot be carried through by a class which itself is rooted in the established conditions. That can and will be done by a class which is the heir of the revolutionary tradition of all the great social upheavals of the past, which will lose nothing from

the complete dissolution of the present conditions beyond all reforms, but will win a whole world. Therefore, the structure of the new Chinese society in the throes of birth will neither be capitalist nor neo-Confucian, as idealised by the petty-bourgeois nationalists. That can only be a Communist society—the creation of the working class.

Notes

1. G. von Mullendorf, *"Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (Chinese Branch), No. 2, 1892-93.

2. The Penal Code of the Chinese Republic.

3. Dr. Wang Chiang-hui, "The New Penal Code of China". (The quotation is re-translated from the German edition of this book).

4. "Fundamental Law of the National Government of the Chinese Republic", proclaimed by the *Kuo Ming Tang* on October 4, 1928.

5. *Report of the Ministry of Agriculture,* 1919.

6. The formal collective ownership, however, does not prevent, as will be shown later on, the subordination of the cultivator to the system of landlords' rent and capitalist profit.

7. *Report of the Agrarian Commission* of the Kuo Ming Tang, 1926.

8. *Ibid.*

9. "Whatever may be the specific form of rent, there is one thing in common to all types of rent; the appropriation of rent is the economic form in which property in land is realised; land Jrent presupposes proprietory right in land—the ownership of certain individuals of certain parts of the globe." (Karl Marx, "Capital", Vol. 3, Part II.—All the quotations from Marx are the author's translation from the original German).

10. Karl Marx, "Capital", Vol. 3, Part II.

11. At this point, the original English manuscript of the book contained a comparative study of the development of feudalism in different parts of the world. The study led to several important theoretical conclusions. That part was left out of the German edition, because it dealt in some details with processes of historical development generally known to well-educated European readers. Three chapters of the original manuscript having been lost, they had to be retranslated from German. This is one of those chapters. Therefore, that important treatise on feudalism cannot be included in this edition. But I shall try to re-write it so that it can be added to the next edition.

12. Quoted from Han Fi-tse, a contemporary writer, by Mabel Ping-Hua Lee in "The Economic History of China".

13. Mabel Ping-hua Lee, "The Economic History of China".

14. *Ibid.*

15. Quoted from Ku Kin Tsi-Pin-liu by Mabel Ping-hua Lee in the "Economic History of China".

16. The Book of Han.

17. Book of Mencius.

18. R. Montgomery Martin, "Politics, Trade and Finance of China".

19. The Book of Han.

20. *Ibid.*

21. *Ibid.* ,

22. One *mu* is equal to 6.74 acres.

23. Quoted by Lee in "The Economic History of China".

24. Pollock and Maitland, "History of English Laws".

25. Meadows, "The Chinese and Their Rebellions".

26. *Ibid.*

27. Lee, "The Economic History of China".

28. *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (Chinese Branch), No 2, 1892-93.

29. Hsieh Pao-chao, "The Government of China".

30. "In addition to rent, there is the imperial grain tax; then, local officials levied taxes to meet the cost of Government transport, for the maintenance of higher inspecting officials, for the upkeep of roads and dykes, for patrolling highways, and endless other charges, for example for the construction and repair of the village and city walls, fairs, markets, theatres, field-watchmen, protection of springs, support of schools etc. Most of the local taxes are collected by the village headman".—A.H. Smith, "The Chinese Village".

31. Statistics of the *Chinese Bureau of Economic Information,*

32. *Report if the International Famine Relief Commission,* 1922.

33. *Report of the Ministry of Agriculture,* 1919.

34. "Land Tenure in China", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (Chinese Branch).

35. "The transition from the feudal mode of production takes place in a twofold manner. The producer becomes a trader and capitalist .... This is the really revolutionary way. Alternately, the produce passes directly to the possession of the trader. Although, historically, the latter also is the process of transition ... by itself it does not bring about the subversion of the old mode of production, which it rather conserves and retains as its own pre-conditions." (Karl Marx, "Capital", Vol. Ill, Part

I).

36. "The general conditions for the existence of surplus value and profit... are: the immediate producers must work longer than the time required for (gaining the means) reproduction of their own labour power, of themselves. They must perform surplus labour. This is the subjective condition. But the objective (condition) is that they *can* perform surplus labour, that the natural conditions are such that a part of their labour time at their disposal suffices for their reproduction and subsistence as producers, that the production of the necessities for their life does not consume their entire labour time. The productivity of nature sets one limit, one point of departure, one basis. On the other side, another limit is set by the development of the social power of production of their labour. Regarded still more closely since the production of food stuff is the primary condition of their life and of all production generally, the labour applied to that production, that is to

say, agricultural labour in the widest economical sense, should be sufficiently productive, so that the entire labour time available is not absorbed in the production of foodstuff for the immediate producers; so that agricultural surplus labour and, consequently, agricultural surplus produce may be possible." (Karl Marx, "Capital", Vol. Ill, Part 2).

37. Lee, "The Economic History of China". All the figures are given in the nearest round number.

38. "No labour is spent for the production of fodder, unless that can also serve the purpose of human subsistence. Horses are seldom used for luxury or military purposes, for travel or for the transport of goods; but mules, camels, ass and goats are used on the north of the Yangtse for transport and other purposes ... In the southern and eastern provinces, all animals are rare. The transport of goods and passengers is done in boats or by human beings. The natives do not use butter, milk or cheese. The few cattle find their feed on the wasteland round the village." (Williams, "The Middle Kingdom".).

39. "The patriarch of three or four generations compels his sons and grandchildren to stay with him; their houses must be next to his. They with their families constitute a common social unit." *(Ibid).*

40. Chen Shao-kwan, "The System of Taxation in China".

41. "The product of land must support all Government officials, merchants, all Tartar families, who hold the land in some or other form of feudal vassal-ship, and all the farmers who do not do any work . . . Acquisition of land is the most popular means for making capital productive; and throughout the East, there is no place where the right of landownership is not respected." (Montgomery Martin, "Trade, Finance and Society in China".).

CHAPTER III

THE NATIONAL ECONOMY OF CHINA

China proper, with her twenty-one provinces including Manchuria, has an area of 1,896,500 square miles. The area of entire country, previously called the Chinese Empire, and which (excepting Outer Mongolia) still nominally belongs to the Republic, is 4,278,350 square miles. The population of China proper, according to the latest available information, is 436 millions, and that of the so-called Greater China (including Tibet, Turkestan and Mongolia) is 447 millions.[1] So, the density of population is approximately 220 per square mile in China proper, and 100 if the outer regions are taken into the calculation. The distribution of population in China proper itself is also not uniform. For example, in the territories adjoining Shanghai and Nanking, the density is as high as 875 per square mile, that is. higher even than in Belgium, the most thickly populated country in the world. The pressure of population ia equally great in Canton. The impression gathered at these places, frequently visited by foreigners, is the basis of the prevailing notion that China is an over-populated country. In contrast to the high pressure in those places, the north-western province of Kansu has a population of 47 per square mile, and the south-western province of Yunan, of 67 per square mile.

The most characteristic feature of the Chinese national economy is the disproportionate distribution of social labour. An abnormally large portion is absorbed in the production of food. In the countries which are equipped with the modern means of production, on the average, thirty-five per cent of the total social labour is employed in the food producing sector of national economy. In China the proportion is as high as eighty-five per cent. Yet China is not a food-exporting country. On the contrary, she imports a considerable

amount of food-stuffs, and the amount has been increasing lately. In 1915, it war seventeen per cent of the total import. In 1925, it was twenty-four per cent; in 1927, it was twenty-seven per cent.[2]

In view of the proverbial intensiveness of Chinese agriculture, it appears anomalous that China should import food. More than one crop is raised on the larger part of the cultivated land. The rich-lands of the south are naturally very fertile. The amount of labour the Chinese peasant puts into the cultivation of land is many times greater than in any other country, It has been estimated that the surface of the cultivated soil in China is actually treated several times a year with human hands to the depth of about fifteen inches.[3] This may sound fantastic; but there is enough truth in it to indicate how hard the Chinese peasant labours to make the land bear fruit. Foreign observers have often admiringly written about the "amount of efficient human labour cheerfully given for a daily wage of fifteen cents U.S. currency."[4] The world renowned habit of putting a fabulous amount of labour in the tillage of soil has been instilled in the Chinese peasant by the conditions of production which prevailed in the country from the very dawn of civilisation. In the classical pest, imperial injunction to the people was: "Keep your lands clean, manure them richly, and make a farm resemble a garden."[5] Ever since the Chinese peasant has abided by that injunction; so much so that it is correctly observed that agriculture in China is rather kitchen-gardening than agriculture in the wider sense of the term.

In spite of the primitiveness of the mode of cultivation, the productivity of soil in China does not compare very unfavourably with other countries. This, of course, is a relative statement, meaning that the produce of a given unit of land in China is not always less than in other countries, if the labour employed in the process of production is not taken into consideration, if it is measured not by value, but by volume. The average yield for the wheat crop in the United States of America is fifteen bushels per acre; in China it is about twenty-five bushels. It has been calculated by experts that in 1900 the produce of a square mile of land in the United States could maintain only sixty-one consumers (exclusive of animals employed in the process of production); in China it supported 1783.[6] This explains the great difference in the standards of living in the two countries compared. Nevertheless, it shows, making sufficient allowance for possible exaggeration, that the productivity of the soil in China is

not lower than that required for maintaining her population on a tolerable standard of living. In other words, China should not import food to meet the very limited requirements of her population. Still she does. Why? The reason is that Chinese agriculture is very intensive, not extensive. Only a small fraction of the arable surface of the country is cultivated. That being the case, all the calculations showing a high productivity of Chinese agriculture are misleading. They do not present a true picture of the situation.

The total area of arable land in China proper (excluding the vast regions of Mongolia, Tibet and Turkestan) has been estimated as between 800 to 900 million acres.' But the area actually under cultivation has never exceeded one-third of the total. If the outer regions are taken into the calculation, the proportion has always been not more than fifteen per cent. Approximately, the area under cultivation was 150 million acres in 1890, 266 in 1914, and 233 in 1918. The statistical data for the subsequent years are very incomplete; but the tendency appears to be towards decline.[8]

It appears to be paradoxical that, in a predominantly agricultural country, such a small portion of the total arable land should be actually under cultivation. Plenty of land is available for cultivation. Labour also is apparently abundant. There has been a steady increase of population ever since the seventeenth century. The peasants are highly skilled in making the land bear fruit in their primitive way. Yet only a small fraction of the tillable land is made productive; and the fraction is so small that its relatively high rate of produce cannot support the population of the country even at a very low standard of living. The reason of this paradox is to be found in the conditions of agricultural production in China. Land is cultivated exclusively with human labour. Bovine animals are very rare. There are practically no reliable statistics about live-stock. It has, however, been estimated that the number of bovine animals—horses, cattle, mules, asses, all told—does not exceed twenty-four millions in China proper.[9] Five millions of them are in Manchuria alone; consequently, the supply for the rest of the country is very meagre. It is approximately one head per twenty people. The comparison with a few other countries, chosen at random, shows how extremely poor China is in livestock, so essential for the cultivation of soil. This is a great handicap for an agricultural country.

Germany has one head of bovine animal for three people;

Denmark one for one; Spain one for 3.6; France one for 2.3; Great Britain one for 4.7; Hungary one for five; Italy one for five; Holland one for 3.5; Yugoslavia one for 2.4; Poland one for 2.5; Romania one for 2.8; and India one for 1.9.[10]

The scarcity of live-stock places great limitations on the method of cultivating the soil in China. Even the primitive wooden plough is not the common tool, spades being frequently used instead. When the plough is at all used, it is often drawn by human beings. Under these conditions, it takes twenty-four days (of twelve or more hours) of human labour to raise one acre of wheat.[11] In the United States of America, the labour time required for the same purpose is only two days of less duration. Taking the mean between the extreme backwardness of the Chinese condition, on the one hand, and the most advanced mode of production in the United States, on the other, it can be reasonably calculated that the cultivation of soil in China absorbs eight to ten times more social labour than it should under normal conditions. Consequently, more land cannot be brought under cultivation, although plenty of it is available, and the limited area of cultivated land must support many more people than it normally could. The chronic poverty of the peasant masses, and the incredibly low general standard of living, are the result of such a state of national economy. The proverbial intensiveness of Chinese agriculture means the obligation of the peasants to put in the greatest amount of labour in making the smallest area of land bear the largest possible quantity of food. The cultivation of land, taking place under such unfavourable conditions of production, absorbs practically the entire social labour, thereby restricting the free development of other industries.

The natural and historical limitations upon agricultural production could be overcome through cattle-raising and the introduction of modern machinery in the cultivation of the soil. That, however has been done until now on a very insignificant scale. In the past, the feudal-patriarchal relation of property in land deprived the peasant practically of the entire surplus product which, under the given unfavourable conditions of production, was very meagre. Even now the relation has hardly changed. The peasant has no means to improve his mode of production. He can buy neither live-stock nor modern implements. In course of time, the small surplus product of agriculture ceased to be the monopoly of the feudal-patriarchal

landlord (individual or the State). Trading capital became an important factor of national economy and appropriated a part of the surplus value as profit. Capital thus accumulated, however, did not revolutionise the mode and means of production. To do so is not in the nature of trading capital.[12] Instead of freeing the peasantry from the feudal-patriarchal bondages, it operates on the background of the old social relation, thereby increasing the exploitation of the producing class. The profit of trading capital represents a part of the surplus value produced under pre-capitalist conditions of production. Therefore, trading capital does not introduce really capitalist means and mode of production which are sure to disrupt its social basis. As long as the entire surplus produce of the peasants' labour remains in the control of the feudal-patriarchal landlords and the trading bourgeoisie, it is not possible for agriculture to be improved through cattle-raising and the introduction of modern machinery.

From the very olden days, handicrafts developed in China, but only as a subsidiary to agriculture. The peasant, having to devote practically the whole of his labour power to the production of food, the growth of handicrafts was bound to be very slow. All his surplus produce taken away from him, the peasant could not develop into a free artisan. It has been shown in the previous chapter how the process was discouraged, and, when necessary, positively checked by the feudal-patriarchal ruling class. Originally, handicraft production was for use. The peasant grew cotton in his homestead, and his womenfolk spun and wove. Other articles of primitive necessity, and rudimentary tools for the tillage of the soil, were also manufactured by the peasants at home, But in course of time, in spite of all difficulties and obstructions, handicraft production ceased to be exclusively for use. It began to be exchanged, first inside the village, and then between villages. Eventually, the self-sufficient village became a thing of the past. Although handicraft still remained, to a large extent, closely allied with agriculture, most of the artisans being primarily, at least partially, peasants, its social character changed. The produce of labour, performed under pre-capitalist conditions, became commodities for exchange through the intermediary of trading capital.

A very small section of handicraft was, however, separated from agriculture, to become an independent factor of national economy. At present, in the national economy of China, handicraft occupies a place of importance next only to agriculture. Still it remains largely

in the state of semi-dependence upon the latter. Most of the artisans are still peasants, subject to feudal-patriarchal social relations, although an increasing portion of their produce finds its way to the market—not only national, but international—as commodity. It is the case not only with what they produce as artisans, but with the produce of their labour as a whole.

It is estimated that about ten million people are employed in handicraft production.[13] Compared with the total population of the country, it is a very small number. Obviously, it is the number only of the urban artisans, who are completely divorced from agriculture and produce exclusively for exchange. The greater part of the Chinese handicraft production still takes place not in urban workshops, but in the village cottage, that is, in the home of the peasant, the whole family usually performing the labour. As a rule, however, the raw material is no longer produced by the same people. It is supplied by others who do not directly participate in the process of production, but control it in one way or the other.

Silk is the main product of Chinese handicraft. At present manufactured and raw silk constitutes twenty per cent of China's export trade. Steam filatures have been established at Shanghai, Canton, Hankow and other smaller places. But about half of the silk is produced (reared and worked up into fabrics) by the peasants in their home. The average total production recently has been 200,000 piculs[14] a year. (One picul is equal to 60.5 kilos). About three-fourth of the quantity is exported.[15] Thus the characteristic feature of the Chinese national economy is that commodities produced under -very backward conditions of production have to compete in the capitalist world market. The result of this process is disastrous. It causes such a redistribution of labour in the process of production as pauperises the producing masses. They are completely proletarianised, subjected to the worst kind of capitalist exploitation, while still remaining in feudal-patriarchal bondage.

The total value of the foreign trade of China increased from 1000 million taels in 1918 to 2000 million in 1926. During the same period, the value of export grew from 480 millions to 850 millions. The great expansion in value does not represent a true picture of the situation. It was largely due to the drop in exchange rates. During the period under review, the gold value of the tael depreciated nearly by fifty per cent. So, in reality, the export trade of China remained stationary

during the period.[16] Nevertheless, the volume itself is considerable when it is kept in mind that during the same period the productive capacity of the country did not improve appreciably. The situation is better understood from an analysis of the export trade.

China's main exports are silk, tea, beans (and their products), oil-seeds, animal products (skins, hides, fur and wool), cotton and minerals (antimony, iron ore, manganese etc.). The great bulk of the export trade is covered by the products of agriculture and allied industries. The area under cultivation having not extended, the method of agriculture having not improved, and the mode of production in the allied industries having remained in the same primitive condition, there could not be any substantial increase in the production of these commodities. Therefore, a relatively large volume of export, which expands steadily though not rapidly, means that contact with the world market drains out of China not only her small surplus product, but a considerable portion of her necessary produce. This does not always take place in a direct way, but through a redistribution of labour, not from a backward to a higher mode of production, but inside the same process of production. In other words, the exigencies of the world market shift a large volume of social labour in China from the production of food to the raising of nonfood crops. That represents an encroachment upon China's necessary production. Owing to the given conditions of production, eighty-five per cent of social labour must be devoted to the production of food necessary for the maintenance of the entire population; therefore, the labour withdrawn from food production represents a corresponding inroad into necessary production.

This can be illustrated by facts. During the period under review, beans and other oil-seeds contributed more to the expansion of Chinese exports than any other item. At the end of the period, they constituted twenty-three per cent of the total export. During the period, in which these non-food agricultural products increased their share in the export trade, the import of food-stuff increased correspondingly. This proves that the labour for the raising of beans and oil-seeds was produced by withdrawing it from food production. Thus, the demands of the world market caused a redistribution of labour in China in direct antagonism to her own elementary interests. China imports manufactured articles. She must pay for them by exporting goods in exchange. Owing to the backwardness of the mode of production,

her exports contain many more units of labour than required for the manufacture of her imports; so much so that, in spite of the inroad upon her necessary production, she cannot export enough to cover the import. Ever since her "free" contact with the world market, the balance of international trade has always been unfavourable for China. This adverse balance represents her indebtedness—foreign capital invested in the country.

During the last three quarters of a century, ever since her doors were forced open to international commerce, the foreign trade of China has expanded to very large dimensions. In the middle of the nineteenth century, the total value was hardly over 100 million taels; the present value, calculated at the exchange rate of that period, is around a thousand million taels. There is absolutely no reason to believe that this huge growth of foreign trade has been caused by the development of production in China. Modern industry constitutes an insignificant sector of the Chinese national economy. China produces about twenty-five million tons of coal per year—hardly hundred pounds per head of her population. The quantity of iron ore extracted was 1,900,000 tons in 1920. Later on, it declined to 1.5 millions. The amount of pig-iron produced was 427,000 tons in 1920; it declined to 370,000 tons in 1925. The production of steel is practically negligible, about 100,000 tons per year.[17] The development of the modern means of transport inside the country is equally restricted. There are hardly 8,000 miles of railways and no more than a thousand miles of road suitable for any kind of vehicular traffic. Cotton textile, and partially silk, are the only branches of industry in which an appreciable expansion of production has taken place. Of these the bulk of expansion has taken place in cotton textile, which contributes very little to the export trade.

The total value of goods exported from China in 1927 was 940 million taels. Of that, twenty millions were covered by coal, twenty-five millions by articles under the heading "ores, metals and manufactures thereof", and forty millions by factory products. All together these items composed about 10 per cent of the entire export trade. The remaining ninety per cent of the export was supplied by industries in which the mode of production still remains very largely primitive, and consequently whose productivity could not possibly have increased in correspondence with the expansion of export trade. Well over fifty per cent of the entire export is covered by agricultural and past-

oral products.[18] The production in this sphere, except in the case of beans and oil-seeds, has not increased. The next item is silk, providing 168 millions of the export trade. But the manufacture has also not expanded appreciably. On the other hand, tea has practically disappeared from the list of Chinese exports. Previously it used to be a large item.

Evidently, export trade has not expanded on the basis of an increasing production of commodities. The expansion of trade in China represents transfer of the entire surplus product from the possession of the producer to the control of the trader. Not only is the producer deprived of his entire surplus produce, but heavy inroads are made even upon his necessary production. The surplus value produced, therefore, contains a large amount of forced labour; that is to say, capitalist exploitation takes place on the basis of precapitalist production, Under such circumstances, the primary producer has no chance of ever growing into a capitalist. Consequently, real capitalist development—revolution in the means and mode of production, destroying old social relations—is impossible.

The economic development of China is hindered from two sides: by the feudal-patriarchal elements in her social structure, and by imperialist intervention. Native trading capital is the connecting link between the twin forces of reaction. The natural resources of China are so great that, once these mutually auxiliary forces of reaction are eliminated, her national economy can develop by big strides, easily overcoming the defective natural conditions of production. With an extensive application of the modern mechanical means of production, the productive capacity of labour can be immensely increased. In that case the proportion of social labour absorbed in the necessary production will be greatly reduced, labour will be withdrawn from the production of food without injuring the elementary interests of society- Not only will land now under cultivation be worked with much less labour, making it available for other industries, the land at present lying waste will also be made to bear fruit. The result will be an immense increase in the per capita rate of agricultural production, and the surplus in that basic sector of national economy will lay a broad foundation for the growth of manufacturing industries.

Conventional economists ascribe all the miseries of China to her supposed over-population. It has been shown that the theory of

over-population is a myth. China has a very large population, but she is not over-populated. If all the arable land is cultivated a much larger population can be maintained. When labour employed in the cultivation of the soil will be reduced through the introduction of machinery, her teeming millions will be the greatest asset of China's national economy. The extreme backwardness of China's national economy, the dire poverty of her masses, is due not to the supposed over-population, but to the most primitive exploitation of labour, as a matter of fact, to an incredible wastage of social labour which is the source of all national wealth.

A few facts about the natural resources of China indicate the potentialities of her national economy. Possession of coal and iron is the essential condition for modern economy. China has large deposits of both the minerals. According to the latest geological survey, China's coal deposits amount to 217,000,626 million tons, of which 43,953 million tons are anthracite. Iron ore deposits have been estimated at 956,180 million tons, containing, on the average, about forty-five per cent of metal.[18] At present China has the practical monopoly of the world antimony supply. She is also the largest producer of tungsten. Her petroleum reserves have been roughly estimated at 10,000 million tons. When to these basic materials are added tin, copper, manganese and other materials of secondary importance, it cannot be doubted that China is completely fitted with all the conditions to modernise her national economy very rapidly as soon as it is free from the existing restrictions, partly of historical and partly of external nature.

The question of capital needed for rapid industrial development of the country has often been raised. It is maintained that China cannot become a modern industrial country without the aid of foreign capital. The corollary to this theory is that, in return for the aid, she must accept political subservience to the more advanced countries. The lack of capital has been taken for granted by the leading Chinese themselves. For example, Sun Yat-sen made a fantastic scheme of industrialising China with capital borrowed abroad. Only in the year before his death he came to understend the implications of his ill-conceived policy of modernisation. But there is room for doubt that he really changed his belief in the helpful role of foreign capital. The Nanking Nationalist Government proposes to carry out the scheme of economic reconstruction, and it is frankly in favour of a free flow

of foreign capital. Experience, however, should teach the Chinese a different lesson. Foreign capital will not help China to solve her problem. On the contrary, freedom from its yoke is the essential condition for a really free economic development.

The capital required for the modernisation of China's national economy is available in the country. A considerable amount of it is accumulated in the possession of the trading class. The native joint stock banks alone are capitalised at 560 million silver dollars, about sixty per cent of which amount is actually paid up.[20] Moreover, a large amount of Chinese capital is employed in foreign trade. It is deposited with the foreign banks. There still remain the small, but very numerous, private credit institutions. Their resources are not negligible. Pratically the entire internal trade passess through their hands; consequently, they reserve a substantial share of the surplus of national economy. Although an increasing part of this capital is finding investment in modern industrial concerns, by far the greater bulk is still tied up with such unproductive employment as trading in commodities produced in largely pre-capitalist conditions, usury and landholding. If that great bulk of the capital recources are made available for productive industrial investment, China's dependence upon foreign capital will be very much reduced. The very fact of such a displacement of capital from the unproductive to productive employment will free the forces of national economy from all restrictions.

The basic restriction upon the free employment of the Chinese national economy is the feudal-patriarchal structure of society. Owing to the fact that the wealth accumulating in possession represents the value created by labour performed within the limits of that structure, indeed very largely thanks to that structure, the Chinese middlemen cannot transform their wealth into capital, they cannot invest their wealth for developing such modes of production as will surely disrupt their own social foundation.

These deep-rooted contradictions of the situation render it impossible that the modernisation of Chinese national economy, in a broad sense, would take place within the limits of the capitalist system, that is, on the basis of the private ownership of the means of production. The possibility of any alternative line of development is rejected by those who believe that the modern mode of machine production is inseparable from the capitalist system. Since it has

been so until now, it is assumed that for the modernisation of her economy China must adopt the capitalist system. The existence of the native trading class, the so-called compradores, as the dominant factor in Chinese national economy, is necessary for the foreign exploitation of the country. As long as a country's national economy is dominated by trading capital, it cannot experience a real capitalist development. Therefore, modernisation of Chinese national economy is conditional upon its freedom from the control of trading capital. The forces of real capitalism, namely, the revolutionising modes of production, being too weak to disrupt the influence of reactionary trading capital, the task must be accomplished by some other factor, should China's economic life be freed from the bondage of mediaeva-lism. The task of modernising China's national economy must be undertaken by the social classes which suffer most from the prevailing conditions. The producing classes must assert their ownership of the accumulated surplus production of national economy which has been expropriated by the parasitic, reactionary, trading class. Thus will be found the capital necessary for the development of China's national resources. She will modernise her national economy with a free and extensive application of the mechanical means of production only by disrupting the social basis of production for profit.

Notes

1. *Report of the Chinese Post Office.*

2. *Report of the Inspector General of Maritime Customs,* 1928.

3. P. Monroe, "China: A Nation in Evolution".

4. F.H. King, "Farmers of Forty Centuries".

5. Legge, "Chinese Classics".

6. Lee, "The Economic History of China".

7. King, "Farmers of Forty Centuries."

8. *Report of the Chinese Government Bureau of Economic Informations.*

9. D.K. Lieu, "China's Industries and Finance".

10. *China Year Book,* 1928.

11. *Year Book of the International Agricultural Institute,* 1928.

12. "It (trading capital) cannot by itself do much for the overthrow of the old

mode of production, but rather preserves it and uses it as its premise. . . . The method is everywhere an obstacle to the real capitalist mode of production, and declines with the development of the latter. Without revolutionising the mode of production, it deteriorates merely the condition of the direct producers, transforming them into mere wage-workers and proletarians under worse conditions than of those who have already been placed

under the immediate control of capital, and absorbs their turplus labour on the basis of the old mode of production." (Karl Marx, "Capital," Vol. Ill, P. 394, American edition).

13. Report of the Nanking School of Agriculture.

14. Report of the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce, *1915.*

15. The Chinese Bureau of Informations.

16. Report on the Foreign Trade of China, *1928.*

17. Report on the Foreign Trade of China, *1928.*

18. China Year Book, *1928.*

19. Geological Survey of China, *1924.*

20. China Year Book, *1928.*

CHAPTER IV

FOREIGN AGGRESSION

Geographical situation restricted the contact of ancient China with foreign countries. When navigation was known only to the West-Asiatic and South-European people, the Pacific Ocean was an effective barrier for China on the east. Extensive desert territories, inhabited by traditionally hostile barbarians, made the overland communication to the West hazardous except for the most adventurous travellers. High, impassable mountains separated China from India. Living in such a situation of geographical isolation, the inhabitants of ancient China naturally developed a very conservative and suspicious attitude towards foreigners and everything outlandish. Nevertheless, the anti-foreign sentiment that characterised the public life of modern China and which found the acutest outburst in the closing days of the nineteenth century, is not to be traced all the way back into Chinese history. On the contrary, the sages of ancient China taught toleration, hospitality and friendship towards the foreigners. The classical Holy Books contain such injunctions: "Be kind to strangers who come from afar." Confucius taught that "all within the four seas are brethren." The anti-foreign sentiment is a recent growth, and developed under very great provocations. It was a reaction to the behaviour of the Europeans who visited China ever since the sixteenth century.

In addition to the behaviour of the European visitors, there are other historical reasons for the Chinese people to be suspicious and hostile to foreigners. The struggle to keep the barbarian invaders off her western and northern frontiers continued throughout the history of China. She was not always successful in that historic struggle. Repeatedly, the Chinese soil was overrun by barbarian hordes dealing death and destruction far and wide. More than once, the barbarian invaders established their domination over the country for periods

of varied length. Although on all those occasions the invaders were ultimately absorbed in the Chinese society, just as "captive Greece took captive her rude conqueror", their advent, in the beginning, could not but make an unfavourable impression upon the Chinese mind. Moreover, all the invading races having been much lower in the scale of civilisation, it was natural that the Chinese should regard all outsiders as inferior to themselves. The behaviour of the early European visitors, with the exception of the mediavel scholarly travellers like Macro Polo and the Jesuits, was certainly not such as could possibly convince the Chinese that the visitors represented nations at least as civilised as themselves.

It was but natural that the Chinese assumed an air of superiority to all foreigners. The Tatars, Huns, Mongols and such like races, with whom they had from time to time come into contact until the sixteenth century, possessed decidedly lower types of culture. A similar attitude is to be found in all the ancient races which developed their respective civilisations with very little mutual contact. But, whenever any foreign visitor merited a different attitude, he was received by the Chinese with great consideration. For example, the Venetian traveller Marco Polo was admitted and given a place of honour in the Court of the great Kublay Khan. Many a Jesuit father also held high official positions during the latter part of his regime and in the earlier years of the Manchu rule. The Europeans, who visited the Chinese coasts from the sixteenth century onward, generally were of a very low cultural level, being adventurers recruited from the very riff-raffs of the European society, and acted hardly any better than barbarians. An English colonial official, having little sympathy for the Chinese, wrote: "The maritime strangers from the Occident, who first appeared on the sea-board of China, had, as adventurers and turbulent seamen, many of the outward qualities of the continental peoples hitherto known." And he apologised that "it never occurred to the Chinese that these men might be among the least cultivated members of a large and orderly community; and they even did not inquire whether the resemblances in the specimens before them were anything but superficial."[1] But history shows that the behaviour of those adventurers and turbulent seamen was not a superficial unrefined ness, to which the Chinese should have been more tolerant, but it represented the aggressive policy of incipient imperialism. The behaviour of the European governments and their exalted representa-

tives in their relations with China was often highly provocative, which could hardly make a good impression upon the Chinese.

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In spite of the great geographical barriers, from the very early days, ancient China did have some contacts with ether civilised countries of the time. Trade relations with Cathay are referred to in the Bible. Already in the closing centuries of the pre-Christian era, the emperors of China sent able ambassadors to different mercantile countries, where "they obtained bright pearls, gems, precious stones, yellow gold and various other commodities."[2] In the second century B.C., an embassy from the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius was cordially received in the Chinese Court, and peaceful trade relations were established between the two countries. Under the limitations imposed by geographical conditions, a fair amount of trade between China and the Mediterranean countries was carried on peacefully throughout centuries. In the seventh century, the Nestorians from Syria found not only a refuge but a hospitable home in China, where they propagated their faith without any hindrance. Only as late as in the earlier decades of the nineteenth century, one British ambassador after another could not accommodate himself with the Chinese Court, and trading rights were subsequently wrested by ruthless military expeditions.

Long before the Christian era, Indians and Malayans traded with China. In the eighth century, the Arabs found the sea route to the Far East. They as well as Buddhist missionaries from India received free admittance into China. The latter had come there also by the sea route several hundred years earlier with the zeal to make converts to their new religion. Canton became a busy centre of overseas trade. Throughout the period between the seventh and the seventeenth century, considerable foreign trade was transacted from there. One of the most ancient Mosques of the world still stands in Canton, where the Arabs first landed and from where they earned on a brisk trade for centuries.

The Chinese population embraces many million Muslims. They have never been subjected to any persecution for their belief. It is another proof that China had all along been tolerant to all peaceful foreigners, until their visit was accompanied by a high-handed haughtiness, barbarous cruelty and lust for conquest.

The propagation of Christianity was not prohibited until the internal feud of the Catholic Church was brought into China in the

shape of the struggle between the Jesuits and the Dominicans for the hegemony of the Far-Eastern domain of the Pope. The Jesuits had decided not to interfere with the native religious institutions, and occupied themselves with educational work, which, when done with no ulterior motive but scientifically, is the most eifective means to fight traditional superstition. Consequently, they endeared themselves to the Chinese. They were not only popular in the country at large but made converts even in the imperial Court. It is recorded that, on the eve of the downfall of the Ming dynasty, more than a hundred members of the royal household had embraced Christianity as preached by the Jesuits. "For a time it seemed to observers that China might become Roman Catholic.[3] The Manchus also protected and patronised the Jesuits. Then broke out the fierce quarrel between the Jesuits and the Dominicans in China. Supported by the Pope, the latter, more conservative and less learned than the Jesuits, gained the upper hand. They began to abuse the privilege granted to the missionaries in China. They used their religious liberty to interfere in the political affairs of the country. The Christian nations were well advanced in the stage of capitalism, and were manifesting imperialist ambitions. The Church became the advance guard of incipient imperialism. Evident political purpose of the missionaries led to their expulsion, not only from China, but also from Japan, in the eighteenth century.

But the expulsion of the Christian missionaries was not an effective check to the aggressive purpose with which the visitors from Europe appeared on the coast of China. The sea route to China had been discovered by the Arabs eight hundred years earlier. Soon after rinding their way to India round the Cape of Good Hope, the Portuguese reached China, following the footsteps of the Arabs, in 1515. On their way from India, they took possession of Malacca which was a tributary of the Chinese Empire. That act of aggression naturally did not make a very good impression upon the Chinese. In view of such a beginning, they could not possibly believe that the new visitors came with the purpose of peaceful trade. When the Portuguese arrived at Canton, they were looked upon as invaders, and as such could not be given a cordial welcome. Upon that, they behaved in an insolent manner outraging the traditional Chinese conception of politeness and ceremonies with which a foreign visitor should approach the host. Having established their Empire in India, and subsequently

conquered Malacca, the Portuguese were overbearing towards the Chinese, whom they treated with disrespect and shocking cruelty. [4] Unaccustomed to handling such a new kind of barbarians, the Chinese officials ordered that the strange visitors "should be instructed for three days regarding ceremonies, at the Mohammadan Mosque".[5] The Portuguese disregarded that harmless injunction with shockingly bad manners. "In consequence of disrespectful behaviour in the capital, the interpreter was condemned to death, and the rest of the party sent back as prisoners to Canton to be expelled from the country."[6]

Expelled from Canton, obviously for their own fault, the Portuguese continued their aggression upon China. They used the Malay Peninsula as the base of their prolonged operations. The Chinese had not been wrong in suspecting their intentions after they had conquered Malacca on their way for the first time to China. Gradually, the unwelcome visitors succeeded in making their superior instruments of warfare prevail, and found footings at Amoy, Foochow and Canton. But there again, they behaved so intolerably that they were confined to the Peninsula of Macao. The greatly different experience of China's early contacts with modern Europe, firstly through the Jesuit missionaries, and later through the Portuguese merchant-conquerors, shows that the attitude of China was determined by the behaviour of the visitors. "Not content with trade, the Europeans, from the first, treated the natives with cruelty, employed high-handed methods and seized cities and land as bases for trade."[7] Consequently, the Chinese could not be friendly disposed to visitors whose motives were so evidently hostile.

After the Portuguese came the Spaniards with even greater over-bearance towards non-European races, an attitude engendered by their conquest of Mexico, Peru and subsequently the Philippine Islands. In view of the fact that the Spaniards had brutally massacred the Chinese settlers at Manila, they were very unwelcome in China. Their designs upon China were, however, still less successful than those of the Portuguese. Nor were the Dutch, who carne after the Spaniards, more successful in their venture. In 1622 they tried to capture Amoy, but were driven away. Thereafter they settled on this island of Formosa, wherefrom they turned their attention to Japan. Subsequently, the struggle with the English for the domination of India and the concern for the possession of the Malay Archipelago included the Dutch to leave China altogether.

The period of systematic European aggression in China did not begin until well after the English had appeared on the scene. Although English traders had visited the Chinese coast ever since the beginning of the seventeenth century, and had established small settlements under the shelter of their cannon, they did not begin any concerted action until the latter part of the following century. During those two hundred years, the English were occupied with colonising America and conquering India. At home, they were laying the foundation of modern imperialism. When at last they turned their attention to China, the English were better equipped for the job than their predecessors—the Portuguese, the Spaniards and the Dutch. They began their operations in China not as marauding bands of private adventurers, but as representatives of an imperialist nation, with the full support of the home government. By the conquest of India, they had created the pre-conditions for the success of their venture in China.

The other serious menace to China was her relations with Russia, which began in the latter part of the seventeenth century. The fall of the Ming dynasty and the Manchu invasion plunged the country in chaos Taking advantage of those conditions, Russia sought to annex Chinese territories. The war between the two countries was brought to an end in 1689 by the mediation of the Jesuits. Under Peter the Great, Russia's vision was diverted to the West, and her energies were concentrated upon internal problems. For that reason, relations with China became friendly, and there thrived a prosperous trade between the two countries. But in the nineteenth century, Russia again changed her attitude, and she became a leading factor in the general policy of foreign aggression in China.

For two hundred years, the relations between China and the European nations was (*were*) spasmodic. On the whole, it was not decisively harmful to China. While politically their suspicion and hostility for the European visitors were well founded, the policy of the ruling classes to place restrictions upon trade in general was dictated by the social structure of the country. It was necessary for maintaining the political supremacy of the feudal aristocracy, the native Mings and the invading Manchus alike. The reactionary policy of the Chinese ruling class served as an ostensible justification for the use of violence by the Europeans to secure the right of trade in China. On no pretext can the methods employed by the Europeans be justified. The

penetration, nevertheless, could have the objectively revolutionary significance of an instrument for disrupting the reactionary feudal grip upon Chinese national economy, if the European aggressors subsequently did not back up the feudal ruling class against the native forces of revolution.

The policy of European aggression in China was carried on by supporting the feudal ruling class time and again against popular upheavals—during the Taiping Revolt, the Boxer Rebellion, the struggle for the Republic after the revolution of 1911, and the National Revolution of the present time. Extraordinary rights were wrested from the feudal ruling class, then the latter was helped to maintain its decayed power so that foreigners could enjoy their privileged position with a semblance of legality, and subject the masses to brutal exploitation. The representatives of the European bourgeoisie did not attack the Chinese feudal-patriarchal ruling class as such. They attacked it only in so far as it hindered the expansion of their trade. As soon as they got what they wanted, they allied themselves with the Chinese ruling class, for only under an effete regime could they have special rights and privileges. So the objectively revolutionary significance of the penetration of China by modern capitalist trade was more than counterbalanced by the consequence. The decayed feudal, semi-capitalist, national economy was galvanised with the help of foreign imperialism.

It was in the nature of the feudal ruling class to be hostile to the development of commercial activities. That was not a peculiar Chinese characteristic. In Europe also, manufacturing industries and trade could burst the bounds of feudal economy only after a bitter struggle of many hundred years. The struggle in China was bound to be still more bitter and protracted, owing to the fact that the natural conditions of production there made the foundation of a higher form of economy very narrow and shallow. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when the early European traders appeared on the Chinese coast, the national economy of the country was still so delicately balanced that the slightest outside interference would upset it. At that time, the Europeans had very little to sell to the Chinese. They came mostly to buy Chinese manufactures whose fame had reached Europe from the very ancient days. If export trade was allowed unrestricted, increasing demands from abroad would give impetus to manufacturing industries. Consequently, there would take place a

displacement of labour. It would be withdrawn from the production of food. And scarcity of foodgrains, indeed famine, with all its disastrous outcome (revolution, overthrow of the ruling dynasty, and civil war), threatened the country whenever there was the slightest disturbance of the delicate equilibrium of national economy.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, even later, the problem for the ruling class of China was still to prevent the people from "wandering away" from the land to "branch industries". Unrestricted admission of foreign traders coming in quest of the product of Chinese handicraft, would contribute to an expansion of this latter. That would draw more and more labour away from the overcrowded land, whose production, owing to the conditions under which it took place, left no surplus for the producer after the share of the ruling class was paid. Handicraft industries had grown in China from the very earliest days of history; they served as an additional basis for the feudal-patriarchal social structure as long as they remained inseparably allied with agriculture, as long as the artisan remained primarily and essentially a peasant subjected to feudal relations. But separation of the handicrafts from agriculture, as an independent, new mode of production, would undermine the feudal-patriarchal social organisation, just as it did in the countries of Europe. Free exchange of commodities is the means for such a separation; the coming of the European traders opened up greater possibilities for such exchange. Therefore, the feudal State of China and its supporters sought to place all kinds of obstacles to foreign traders entering the country.

The attitude of the ruling class was not of general hostility to foreigners as such. It was the attitude of tottering feudalism towards the expansion of trade which was sure to disrupt its decayed foundation. While the Portuguese and the Spanish merchant-adventurers were repeatedly expelled during the seventeenth century, the Jesuits had been freely admitted and allowed to carry on their educational activities ever since 1583. That fact proved that the Chinese ruling class was not hostile to foreigners as such. Further, the Jesuits were tolerated and even patronised, whereas later on the Dominicans were expelled. The tolerant attitude of the former towards the prejudices of the Chinese religious and social institutions meant support for the feudal-patriarchal ruling class, while the orthodoxy of the Dominicans contained a faint echo of the Reformation in Europe, and therefore represented a threat to the position of the Chinese ruling class, whose

stability depended greatly upon the persistence of such socio-religious customs as ancestor-worship. In other words, the social background of the two sects of the Christian Church determined their respective relations with the Chinese ruling class. Representing pure mediae-valism, bitterly hostile to the Reformation, the Jesuits were welcomed in feudal China. The Dominicans, on the contrary, were not tolerated, because they were closer to the rising bourgeoisie and sympathised with the Reformation. Objectively, they represented a menace to the stability of the feudal-patriarchal ruling class. The social affiliation of the Dominicans was reflected in their actions. Unlike the Jesuits, they dabbled in the internal politics of China as the ideological pioneers of nascent imperialism, whose armies, in the guise of mercantile brigands, were battering on the doors of China.

A new impetus to the growth of modern industries would quicken the development of the native bourgeoisie who, given the opportunity, might eventually begin the struggle for political power. So, finally obliged, at the point of guns, to grant European visitors the right to trade, the Chinese ruling class placed all sorts of restrictions on the Chinese side. Foreign trade was placed under the monopolist control of the feudal-patriarchal State, just as the internal trade traditionally had been, It was confined to one port. By an Imperial decree, issued in 1757, foreigners were permitted to trade with China only at the port of Canton, and obliged to deal exclusively with an official Board. The Board was headed by a personal representative of the Emperer, whose business he transacted.

Thus came into being the famous "Hong Merchants" who played such an important role in China's early contacts with the modern world. The compradores of our time are the descendants of the Hong merchants. They became the parasitic medium of China's foreign trade. Growing out of the feudal monopoly of foreign trade, the compradores even to-day dominate the entire national economy of China as the connecting link between imperialist finance and the largely pre-capitalist native production.

China entered a higher stage of capitalist economy under the guidance of non-producing traders, who remained an integral part of the feudal-patriarchal State, and, by virtue of their new position, became the instrument also of her exploitation by foreign imperialism. The contact with the capitalist world, under such conditions, galvanised the fossilised structure of Chinese society. It affected

Chinese national economy only in one aspect, as far as distribution was concerned. The basic aspect of national economy, namely, production, continued in the old semi-feudal, semi-capitalist state. A revolutionised system of distribution imposed upon a stagnant mode of production meant greater exploitation of the producing masses. Internal trade had developed on the basis of a largely pre-capitalist mode of production, by depriving the producer not only of all his surplus produce, but also of a considerable part of his necessary produce. In other words, reactionary trades capitalism had grown within the scheme of feudal exploitation. At that point, foreign traders intervened, greatly prejudicing the possibility of Chinese national economy eventually bursting the bounds of feudal, semi-capitalist, production, and entering the higher stage of industrial capitalism. Foreign intervention had this reactionary effect upon Chinese national economy: it strengthened the position of the classes which obstructed revolutionisation of production. These classes were the feudal aristocracy and the traders.

In the absence of an appreciable growth of production, expansion of trade, caused by the contact with the world market, meant further encroachment upon the necessary production of the country. The producer was reduced to a position wherein he had still less possibility to improve his means and mode of production. On the other hand, import of articles manufactured abroad by mechanical means soon began to enter the Chinese market, to destroy native handicraft. The peasant was pushed back in the process of his evolution from a backward to a more advanced stage of economy. The conditions for a revolutionary capitalist development of the Chinese national economy had been maturing very slowly and laboriously, owing to the disadvantageous natural conditions of production. The process was further arrested by the forced contact of Chinese national economy with the capitalist world market. Foreigners could not make profit out of the Chinese trade except by hindering the free development of the national economy of that country. That was so, and still is largely so; the Chinese trade, both internal and foreign, is distribution of commodities produced under largely pre-capitalist conditions.

For nearly a century China's foreign trade was carried on under monopolist conditions on both sides. At that time, European nations carried on their overseas trade also through the great Chartered Com-

panics, which eventually became founders of extensive empires. In the earlier decades of the nineteenth century, China's contact with the world market was practically monopolised by the British East India Company. Thanks to their victory in India, the British drove the Dutch out of the field. In 1833, the British Parliament abolished all monopoly rights in the eastern trade. Development of capitalist production led to the disappearance of the monopolist companies on the European side. Efforts began to break down the barriers of monopoly also on Chinese side. A revolution in the composition of the eastern trade made those efforts necessary. Previously, European traders went to the eastern countries to bring the products of their handicraft which were in great demand in Europe. The payment was mostly made in precious metals and articles of luxury. By the earlier part of the nineteenth century, the situation had partially changed. At that time, tea and silk were the principal articles brought from China, and the payment for them was made mostly in opium grown in India, as a monopoly of the British Government. But the revolution in trade had already begun. England was ready to export manufactured goods, particularly cotton fabrics which are a staple necessity of the East. She had already forcibly introduced her cotton manufactures in India, and, in the process of acquiring the necessary freedom of trade, had established an Empire. Now she turned her eyes upon the vast masses of China. The feudal ruling class and the traders allied with it thrived upon a system of national economy which combined agriculture and handicraft into an indivisible whole. They were normally hostile to the free admission into the country of goods which were sure to disrupt the stagnant mode of native production. The hostility was manifested in a letter of Emperor Chien Lung addressed to King George III. The first English mission headed by Lord Macartney came to China in 1793 with the object of "improving commercial relations between the two countries." The English envoy was received in audience by the Chinese Emperor who told the distinguished stranger that China did not require anything from abroad; that she produced everything she needed, but as Chinese products like tea, silk, porcelain etc., were indispensable necesities in other countries, he would permit foreign traders to come to buy these things in China.[8]

In 1813 a second British mission visited China. The result was no better. After the abolition of the East India Company, England

took more energetic steps to secure the freedom of trade in China. Lord Napier was sent to Canton "to supervise free trade, to open up China and to assert national equality." He was expelled from Canton. The failure of the Napier Mission led to the Opium War which was the beginning of a concerned military aggression upon China. A controversy over the traffic in opium was the immediate cause of the war, but the real cause was the transformation of the character of trade. As long as the European traders came to China to get her handicraft wares, they could deal with a special body in certain specified places. But when they began to come with manufactured goods to sell, and the nature of the goods was such as made the Chinese authorities hostile to their free introduction in the country, the European traders were no longer satisfied with the previous position. Not only did they want to sell manufactured goods freely in China. They no longer wanted to take handicraft wares from China exclusively, but raw materials which could be transformed into manufactured articles in their home countries. The trade relations between China and the industrial countries of Europe could no longer be restricted by the arbitrary rules laid down in the letter of Emperor Chien Lung. As the ruling class of China did not agree, the "freedom for peaceful trade" must be conquered with violent means.

The English could oust other Europeans, particularly the Dutch, from the Chinese market, because they had found a means of paying for the articles exported from China. That was opium grown in India. As the habit of smoking opium spread in China, the increasing volume of the drug imported could not be paid with the export of commodities. The scale of foreign trade turned against China. Previously foreign trade represented a flow of treasure into China. It is estimated that during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries no less than 400 million silver dollars reached China from Manila, the United States of America and Japan. Large quantities of gold and silver also came from Siam and Cochin China.[9] From the beginning of the nineteenth century, the direction of the flow of treasure changed. Silver began to flow out of China in payment for opium which could not be covered by the export of commodities. During the half century preceding the first Anglo-Chinese war of 1839, the East India Company had made a profit of 300 million dollars from the opium trade.[10] Obviously, opium trade was ruining China.

The heavy drain of treasure brought State finance to the brink of

collapse. Silver was the standard of exchange. Its price soared high. Taxes collected in kind or in minute copper coins had to be converted into silver before remission to the State Exchequer. The high price of silver caused a heavy drop in the amount of State revenue. As the share of the monarch could under no circumstances be reduced, the deficit had to be made good by the native bankers and pawn-brokers who had the monopoly of the conversion and transfer of the State revenue. Provincial officials also participated in the business either as bribe-takers or as actual share-holders. The two together had made huge profits previously; now they began to complain and demanded that the State should take measures to stop the drain of silver out of the country. The salt monopolists were also injured. In response to the demand of those who controlled the economic life of the country, and in view of the imminent collapse of State finance, an imperial commissioner was sent to Canton in 1839 with the instruction to suppress the opium trade. Canton was the main centre of that pernicious traffic, although smaller quantities passed also through other ports.

There was more than enough reason for the Government to take rigorous measures for the suppression of the traffic. In addition to the grave economic consequences of the traffic, opium was telling heavily upon the moral stamina of the country. Practically all the State officials were addicted to the vice; the consequence of that state of affairs was the collapse of administration and prevalence of rank corruption.

According to an estimate made by the head of the British Colonial Treasury, no less than twenty million people in China were given to the vice.[11] As few poor people could, afford the luxury except in cases of extreme moral degeneration, the habit must have been confined to the upper strata of society, in the first place, the officials participating in the illegal traffic of the drug. Already in 1800, the import of opium had been prohibited, and its cultivation in the country interdicted. But the traffic went on in flagrant violation of the laws of the country. Hongkong thrived as an opium smuggling centre. The balance of foreign trade had been all along in favour of China. From 1830 it turned against her. Even during the decade preceding the war, a favourable balance was maintained in merchandise. But in consequence of the illegal opium trade, the balance had really turned. A very heavy item of "invisible export"

had entered into the calculation of China's international balance sheet. The "invisible export" represented a copious drain of gold and silver as illegal payment of the smuggled opium. The traffic in the pernicious drug had gone to the extent where it injured not only the Chinese, it had even become harmful to the interests of modern capitalism. More far-sighted observers began to complain and advocated the abolition of opium trade. A high official of the Colonial Treasury wrote from Hongkong: "The drain of silver for opium has without doubt checked the trade between England and China, and by impoverishing the Chinese has prevented the sale of our manufactures."[12] Imperialism was outgrowing the early period of sheer robbery. Treasure drained out of India and China in that earlier period had aided the industrial revolution in Britain. Now the operation of imperialism should take a different form, that of finding markets for the goods manufactured at home. The new period was the period of free trade; and the wars that were waged against China to defend the immediate interest of the opium trader had for their broader object the conquest of market and acquisition of the sources of raw material. They laid the foundation of modern imperialism in China.

On his arrival in Canton, the Imperialism Commissioner acted according to his mandate. He prohibited all importation of opium and ordered the destruction of the stock held by foreign traders. The latter refused to comply with his orders. Thereupon the Chinese seized the contraband by force; it was thoroughly within their competence to do so. About twenty thousand chests of opium were seized and destroyed. The English traders were not personally molested, although they had insolently resisted the orders of the Government. They were allowed to go away. They called upon the Home Government for help. England declared war upon China- a war which had less justification than any other war ever waged. The result could be foreseen. Possessing superior means of warfare, the invaders easily captured a number of important ports, and their navy sailed up the Yangtse.

The appeal from the opium smugglers was only the pretext which the British Government had been looking for to declare war upon China with an object much bigger than the protection of opium trade. That was proved by the Treaty of Nanking which brought the war to an end. The main demands of England, conceded by the treaty, were the cession of Hongkong, the opening of five ports (Canton,

Amoy, Foochow, Nimpoo and Shanghai) for free trade, extraterritorial rights for British subjects, and an indemnity of twenty-one million dollars. The question of opium was not even so much as touched in the treaty. Yet that was the ostensible cause of the war.

When the foreign bourgeoisie, on the strength of the gains of the industrial and economic revolution at home, were battering down the forbidding walls of feudal China, great forces inside the country were also marshalling themselves to overthrow the decayed old order. The defeat of China in the first serious conflict with a foreign power exposed the impotence of the Manchu monarchy. It encouraged popular discontent to flare up into a gigantic revolution which might have consumed old China, and a new China might have risen out of the ashes. How a great revolution was suppressed with the willing aid of foreign intruders, will be described in the following chapter. Here, only this much can be observed that the defeat of the Taiping Revolt was mainly the result of foreign intervention, and that unfortunate event gave another lease of life to decrepit mediaevalism in China. The foreign invaders represented a more progressive social class, and smarted under the restrictions of feudal China. Nevertheless, in a critical moment, they sided with the forces of reaction.

It is easier to write a treaty than to enforce it. A stubborn resistance to the Treaty of Nanking was put up by the Cantonese. The resistance led to another war in which England was not alone. Meanwhile, France had entered the scene, and Russia had begun aggressive activities in the North. The war of 1857-60 represented an international aggression upon China. The United States of America also joined in, though not directly. The accomplishment of the invading forces will always remain a classical example of modern vandalism. The privileges ceded to the invaders by the Treaty of Nanking were nothing as compared to those wrested by the Convention of Peking, signed after the sepond war. In addition to the sea-ports, the Yangtse also was opened to foreign trade; the right of extra-territoriality for all foreigners was more clearly defined in their favour; Christian missionaries got the freedom to go all over the country as pioneers of economic penetration and political conquest by their respective nations; the Chinese Government was deprived of the right to levy customs duty higher than five per cent; and to all these, a heavy indemnity in cash was added. During the war, France had taken possession of Cochin China, to which she added Annam in

1883. Britain appropriated a belt of territory on the main land opposite to the island of Hongkong. To Russia was ceded the entire maritime province north of the Amur. The territorial aggression, thus commenced, continued until China lost her sovereignty all but in name, and was split up into the so-called "spheres of influence" of the different imperialist powers.

Japan entered the list in 1871, casting hungry glances at the kingdom of Korea which she eventually annexed. The Sino-Japanese war of 1894 and the Treaty of Shimonoseki which concluded it marked the culmination of the period of foreign aggression—the period of forcing open the doors of China for unrestricted penetration of imperialist trade. During that period, all the outlying parts of the Chinese Empire had been grabbed by foreign Powers. The method of seizing those extensive territories was sheer robbery. The spoliation of Chinese territories is a long, woeful, but familiar tale. It need not be detailed here more than pointing out that, at the end of the nineteenth century, China had lost entire Indo-China to France, Burma to Britain, Korea to Japan and all the territories north of the Amur to Russia. Moreover, Turkestan and Mongolia had been practically annexed by Russia; Tibet by Britain; and the right to dominate Manchuria was disputed by Russia and Japan. Even China proper was as good as annexed by international imperialism, the right of extra-territoriality having given foreigners the proud status of conquerors. On the basis of that right, acquired by the violation of all international law and usage, there had grown inside the territories, where Chinese sovereignty still existed nominally, a sort of small "imperium in imperio". The Foreign Settlements, entirely independent of any Chinese authority, had come into existence as so many strategic bases for further operation against what still remained as a semblance of Chinese sovereignty. Small areas, originally conceded for the settlement of foreigners in each Treaty Port, had assumed the character of so many outposts of imperialism.

The encroachment upon Chinese sovereignty stopped short of actual annexation only owing to the rivalry amongst the imperialist Powers. In the case of India, England was alone. The mediaeval Empires of the Portuguese, Dutch and French collapsed in consequence of the decay of their bases in the home countries. When India was conquered, England was the only country which possessed the preconditions of modern imperialism. But towards the end of the

nineteenth century, other countries also attained a similar stage. Consequently, China could not go the way of India, although most of the pioneering work for her conquest had been done by the English. She became a colony of international imperialism. That is the specific feature of modern China; it greatly influences her economic and political life.

Until the Sino-Japanese war, the inter-imperialist rivalry was not pronounced. All the Christian Powers were united in their aggression upon China. There was no serious friction over the partition of outlying territories. The question of partitioning China proper was raised by the result of the Sino-Japanese war. Japan annexed the Liaotung Peninsula; the Treaty of Shimonoseki marked the beginning of the famous scramble for concessions. The United States of America also intervened as an active factor. Ever since the acquisition of the Philippine Islands, the Americans began to take more interest in the affairs of China. American intervention started with the famous Hay Doctrine of "open door". Divested of its diplomatic dubiousness, the doctrine meant that Uncle Sam also wanted his share of the Chinese spoils. It was the precursor of American hegemony in China, an object realised after a quarter century. But at the time the doctrine was formulated, American imperialism was still in its infancy. It could not assert itself in the situation effectively. The scramble for concessions went on feverishly to the extent of threatening the dismemberment of the territorial integrity of China, in spite of the hypocritical acceptance of the Hay Doctrine by all the Powers.

The possibility of the annexation of China by any one single Power being out of the question, due to the presence of so many aspirants, colonisation of China took the form of creating "spheres of influence". The resistance to the out and out annexation of China no longer came from China herself. She could be easily disposed of by any imperialist invader. Formal annexation was prevented by the rivalry amongst the imperialist Powers. The design on the part of any one Power to annex China was sure to provoke inter-imperialist war. So long as the rivalry was amongst the Christian Powers, any such conflict was ruled out. Finally, Japan appeared on the scene, and by her victory over Russia demonstrated her power. Thereupon, the paramount Christian Power entered into a partnership with the heathen upstart, and the Anglo-Japanese alliance since then regulated inter-imperialist rivalry in the Far East until the tragic consequences

of the world war upset the old balance of power. The Hay Doctrine, at last, asserted itself effectively. In the Washington Conference of 1921, American imperialism dictated the termination of the Anglo-Japanese alliance. Under the conditions of an armed truce amongst themselves, the imperialist Powers jointly subjected China to colonial exploitation.

At the end of the nineteenth century, the nature of China's foreign trade had entirely changed. The balance of trade had definitely turned against her. She no longer exported handicraft wares in return for gold and silver. Even opium had lost its predominance in Chinese imports. It had been replaced by cotton textiles. China had become a real colony, exporting agricultural products in exchange for goods manufactured in other countries. In 1900, the value of her total foreign trade had risen to 270 million dollars; in half a century, it had nearly quadrupled itself. By far the greater part of the trade was in the hands of the English. Meanwhile, industry had developed in other countries also. The colonial trade could no longer be carried on the principle of free trade. Monopolisation of market through the acquisition of colonies had become a necessity. Capitalism had developed into modern imperialism. The leading industrial countries of the world had begun to export increasing amounts of capital, in addition to the export of manufactured goods, with the object of enlarging the market for the latter.

At the end of the nineteenth century, China had been subjected to the operation of modern imperialism. The policy of acquiring concessions for the construction of railways and exploitation of minerals had replaced the older policy of sheer plunder and open territorial aggression. The location of the concessions acquired by the imperialist powers marked their respective spheres of influence.

England, as the paramount Power, laid a heavy hand on the entire Yangtse Valley, the centre of the economic life of China. Russia laid claim to Turkestan, Outer Mongolia and Northern Manchuria, in addition to the extensive territories she had actually annexed previously. Japan's share was South Manchuria, Inner Mongolia and the province of Fukien facing the island of Formosa. France appropriated Yunan, Kwangtung and the adjoining territories of the South. Lastly, Germany took Shantung. The United States of America, still occupied with the enormous task of conquering a Continent and consolidating its position in the New World, did not require any

concession in China. It was still an agricultural country itself; accumulated capital found plenty of profitable investment at home. Indeed, America was still a debtor country; she borrowed capital. So the American attitude towards China was that of a liberal lawyer holding a watching brief—an attitude which was very useful for the gradual conquest of the position of hegemony which she occupies in China to-day.

After a considerable portion of the accumulated wealth had been drained out of the country in the period of plunder, China found herself obliged to accept foreign capital on very unfavourable conditions for the improvement of her means of transport and exploitation of mineral resources. Even that was not to be done in accordance with the needs of her entire national economy, but for the promotion of imperialist trade. The turn of the balance of foreign trade against her created a situation in which she was obliged to grant extensive concessions for loans forced upon her. The deficit in the balance of foreign trade made her indebted to the countries selling her manufactured goods. The very narrow margin of her surplus production made it impossible for her to liquidate the indebtedness by increasing export. A rapid development of her national economy through the introduction of the mechanical means of production had been made well-nigh impossible by the drain of her accumulated wealth. Previously, she had endeavoured to arrest the importation of outlandish commodities as a measure to prevent this critical state of affairs. But her door had been forced open in the sacred name of the free exchange of commodities. The great harm done to her in that process had placed her in a position wherein the exchange, as far as she was concerned, was no longer free. It meant colonial subjugation, though the chains might be of gold. China could square her accounts with the foreign countries trading with her only by accepting from them as loan the sums necessary to cover the deficit in her balance of overseas trade. And as a country not able to pay for the goods she purchased (although not voluntarily) her international credit sank so low that she could not get forced loans except in return for valuable concessions which represented not only great economic loss, but further encroachment on what little was left of her political sovereignty.

The exhausting drain of the accumulated wealth, the loss of extensive territories, and practical forfeiture of political sovereignty

were followed by something much more serious than all of these taken together. It was the subordination of her entire national economy to the interests of imperialist trade and finance. The consequence of that position was economic stagnation and impoverishment of the people. Imperialist Powers acquired extensive concessions for the exploitation of minerals and construction of railways, but actually accomplished only very little. Exporting the greater part of their surplus capital to other fields, where competition was keener, they held China as the reserve. Mutual suspicion prevented the imperialist Powers from making practical use of the vast concessions they acquired at the expense of helpless China. They failed to improve sufficiently the means of transport, so very essential for their own interest—for the development of trade. Being a joint colony of international imperialism, China could not even have the indirect benefit that accrued from colonial exploitation. In the colonies monopolised separately by the imperialist Powers modern means of transport were introduced extensively; but in the case of China they did very little in that direction. Here, they limited their "civilising" mission to the most minimum necessary for carrying on a fair amount of trade, such as, modern shipping facilities in a few ports and short distance railways or steam navigation as feeder services. They were averse to investing capital in constructing extensive systems of railways as for example in India; because, under the given conditions, they could not serve exclusively the monopolist interest of the particular Power making the investment. The sources of raw materials to be made accessible, and markets opened, by such enterprises would be inevitably shared by rival Powers. That would be a violation of the very principle of colonial exploitation which is monopoly. In China the contradictions of imperialism stood out in their crassest form.

The backwardness of the means of transport places tremendous restrictions on trade in China. For example, it costs much more to bring a certain quantity of wheat to Hankow from Shensi, only three hundred miles away, than from the United States or Canada or Australia. Anthracite coal is sold in Shanghai at twenty dollars a ton, but it is extracted in Shansi for a few cents. The great difference represents largely the cost of transport. In such primitive conditions of transport, trades capital thrives in close collaboration with feudal privileges, and national economy is broken up into isolated local markets, dominated by the semi-feudal trader. He greatly hinders the

development of production which actually stagnates. Twenty men's labour Is wasted to bring into the export market the produce of one man's labour. Consequently, the producer gets the smallest fraction of the value created by his labour, a very large part being appropriated by the parasitic trader who brings the commodities to the export market. Modern means of transport would eliminate the parasitic middleman, thereby increasing imperialist profit. Nevertheless, construction of railways and other modern means of transport has proceeded very very slowly in China. The present mileage is like a mere drop in the ocean. Imperialist Powers holding concessions for railway building sat tight on their stakes, waiting for the time when monopolist operation might be possible. Meanwhile, the economic life of China stagnated, and the imperialist booty contained a large element of forced labour. Inherent contradictions obliged imperialism to fall back upon a mode of production which militated against its own interest. In China imperialism plays the dog in the manger.

The service of forced loans was placed under the control of banks belonging to the creditor nationalities. Thus, the State revenues of China were mortgaged to imperialism. Those banks gradually captured the entire credit system of the country. Foreign trade being controlled by those powerful banking institutions, native banks financing the internal trade (as well as the internal transit of foreign trade both ways) also came under their domination. Consequently, imperialist finance could dictate the employment of native capital. Chinese traders, who brought the native product from the remotest corners of the country to the ports, for export, and carried the commodities of foreign origin to all parts of the country, received ample credit and protection from the foreign banks. But by the control of credit, the foreign banks put all kinds of obstacles in the way of the the Chinese taking to industrial pursuits. In other words, foreign domination of the Chinese national economy was secured and maintained through the encouragement of reactionary, non-productive, parasitic, trades capital which was an obstacle to a normal capitalist development of the country.

The modern Chinese bourgeoisie grew largely out of the contact with the imperialist Powers. They are the descendants of the Hong merchants. So very closely linked up with the imperialist exploitation of the country, they cannot promote any substantial improvement of national economy. It is true that lately they are turning their attention

to industrial enterprises; but in these too they are dominated by imperialist finance. Imperialist interest, which previously restricted them to trade, now can permit them to travel a little in the new direction. In any case, they are but instruments of imperialism. As an independent factor, they are too weak to be assertive. Their revolutionary industrial tendencies are overwhelmed by the more fundamental and dominating trading function which is fostered by imperialism.

To what a great extent imperialism dominates the national economy of China, is shown by the following facts. For the payment of the interest on the Boxer Indemnity (450 million taels) and for the services of other foreign loans, important items of State revenue such as railways, salt gabelle and customs are pledged.[13] This by itself would not be so objectionable, if the collection, custody and administration of the revenues were not in the hands of foreigners. As these items cover about half of the entire State budget, their mortgage is extremely prejudicial to the whole system of State finance, and consequently seriously affects the entire national economy.

Out of the 7700 miles of railways, nearly 7000 miles are owned by foreigners, and the concession rights held by them preclude any extensive construction of railways by the Chinese, even if they had the resources necessary for the purpose. Foreign claims are staked almost on all the known mineral deposits of the country. Only twenty-seven per cent of the iron ore extracted belongs to Chinese concerns which, in their turn, are financially controlled by foreign banks. Fourteen out of the eighteen blast furnaces are owned by foreigners. Nearly half of the coal is dug by Chinese concerns; but as coal is mostly exported, the whole industry is controlled by banks financing foreign trade. Further, owing to the lack of capital and credit, Chinese concerns extract coal with very primitive methods. These methods are largely in operation also in concerns directly owned by foreigners. They represent a pre-capitalist form of exploitation. A few foreign banks with a total capital of 80 million pounds control the entire foreign trade of China and a very considerable portion of the internal trade. They also dominate the State finance. About eighty per cent of China's foreign trade is in the hands of foreign shipping companies. A very considerable portion of river shipping is also done in foreign vessels.

Had not foreign imperialism been so deeply involved in the

present conditions of Chinese national economy, it would not intervene in the internal affairs of the country whenever there was any serious threat to the established order. Foreign interests placed insurmountable obstacles to any appreciable economic development of China. The imperialist Powers then adopted the infamous "gunboat policy" to hold the unfortunate country in her present state of stagnation. The imperialist exploitation of China takes place through the subordination of a largely pre-capitalist mode of production to the highly developed capitalist world market. Therefore, imperialism is vitally interested to maintain in China a social organisation in which pre-capitalist production takes place in direct contact with, and under the domination of, the capitalist world market. Time and again, imperialism has openly played this sinister role. It helped the suppression of the Taiping Revolt which promised to give birth to a modern democratic China. It drowned the Boxer Rebellion in torrents of blood, although that also was essentially a great democratic movement. It captured the control of the customs during the troubled days following the revolution of 1911, as a measure directed against the young Republic. It helped the rank reactionary Yuan Shi-kai in his fight against the democratic movement, and encouraged him in the abortive attempt to restore the monarchy. It backed up the feudal war lords who plunged the country in the bloody chaos of protracted civil war with the object of preventing the rise of a democratic China which might not be fully subservient to foreign capital. It helped the feudal militarists against the nationalist bourgeoisie when the latter, under the pressure of the masses, fought for revolutionary democratic freedom. More than once, it massacred the masses when they protested against brutal exploitation and intolerable conditions. Finally, it took the nationalist bourgeoisie under it protecting wings as soon as they had betrayed the national revolution and turned fiercely against the democratic masses. The record of imperialism in China is black indeed.

Notes

1. T.T. Meadows, "The Chinese and Their Rebellions".

2. Morrison, "The Chinese Repository".

3. Monroe, "China: A Nation in Evolution".

4. "Only after display of that manner and of shocking cruelty was he (the early European trader) relegated to one trading centre". (Monroe, "China: A Nation in Evolution.")

5. Repi. rt of the Canton Mandarins to the Emperor.

6. Ibid.

7. Monroe, "China: A Nation in Evolution."

8. "As your Ambassador can see for himself, we possess all things. I set no value on ol jects strange and ingenious, and have no use for your country's manufacture. But as tea, silk and porcelain, which the Celestial Empire produce", are absolute necessities to European nations, we have permitted as signal of favour that foreign *Hongs* should be established at Canton, so that your want might be supplied and your country thus participate in our beneficence." (Letter of the Emperor Chien Lung to King George III.)

9. Montgomery Martin, *Report to the Home Government,* 1842.

10. Monroe, "China: A Nation in Evolution."

11. Montgomery Martin, "Commercial, Financial and Social Conditions in China".

12. *Ibid.*

13. Including the Boxer Indemnity, China's foreign indebtedness amounts approximately to 215 million pounds, the actual payment to be made on the maturity of the loan is as much as 350 million pounds. (J.R. Baylin, "Foreign Loan Obligations of China"). Considering that China has an average annual deficit of about 20 million pounds in the balance of foreign trade, and that her budgeted revenue is less than 50 million pounds—not enough to cover the national expenditure—this foreign indebtedness represents complete colonisation of the country.

CHAPTER V

THE TAIPING REVOLT

The bourgeois democratic revolution, subverting feudal relations and establishing the capitalist social order, did not take place at the same time even in the countries which, thanks to that experience, stood at the van of modern imperialism. It covered a whole period of history—about four hundred years. Beginning in the fifteenth century, with the rise of the Italian Republics, it continued through centuries, until the Paris Commune of 1871 opened up the era of proletarian revolution. The outstanding landmarks left by that rising tide of bourgeois democracy, were the European Reformation and the Peasant War in Germany, the English Revolution of 1648-88, the Great French Revolution and the revolutions of 1848. Even when capitalism developed into imperialism, and ceased to be a revolutionary force in a number of countries, the historic tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution were still to be accomplished elsewhere. The world, taken as a whole, entered the epoch of the proletarian social revolution, when the bourgeois democratic revolution was not yet completed in many countries. In the period of the transition of human society from one historic epoch to another, certain features of both overlapped. For example, the Russian Revolution of 1905 was essentially a bourgeois democratic revolution, although it was greatly influenced by the proletariat; and the bourgeois democratic revolution was not fully accomplished in Russia until 1917 when the proletariat captured political power to begin the reconstruction of society on the basis of socialism. Earlier or later occurrence of the bourgeois democratic revolution in the various parts of the world was determined by the grade of their economic development.

The much-maligned, misinterpreted and little understood Taiping Revolt represented the entrance of China into the period of the bourgeois democratic revolution. Slow development of the capitalist mode of production was the cause of the delay. But, after all, it was not so very late. Europe was still fighting the battles of bourgeois democracy, when the revolution began in China. The bourgeois democratic revolution continued in Europe still later in the form of the national liberation movements in Hungary, Poland and Italy. It was not accomplished in Russia until as late as 1917. When the historic character of the Taiping Revolt is properly appreciated, it becomes evident how rank reactionary was the action of the Christian Powers in helping its suppression.

It is entirely misleading to apply the standard of the nineteenth century political ideas in judging the historic character of the Taiping Revolt. By tracing the history of the entire period of the bourgeois democratic revolution, one detects a progressive clarification of its social outlook and political doctrines. Judged by the standard of the "Republic of Reason", established by the Great French Revolution, the democratic State of the Venetian merchants can hardly be recognised as the beginning of the new era. The fathers of the First Reform Bill, in their hearts, did not approve of the puritanism of Oliver Cromwell, who also believed in the divine inspiration as did the Taiping Wang. Nor did a Thiers believe any more in the "Golden Age" of Jean Jacques Rousseau. Still less did Miliukoff or Kerenski consider himself to be a socio-political progeny of Pugat-cheff, who already in 1773, as the leader of a mighty peasant uprising, had made the first serious on-slaught on Tzarist absolutism. The German Constituent Assembly, either of 1848 or of 1919, certainly did not find the scholastic dogmas of Martin Luther correspond to its principles of democracy. Still all those people were actors in the same great drama of history, appearing in different scenes which were separated often by centuries. Only such a retrospective view of history as a dynamic process enables one to appreciate correctly the character of the Taiping Revolt.

The peasant revolt and the strivings of young capitalism to expand, are the two basic factors which sooner or later lead to the bourgeois democratic revolution. The task of bourgeois democratic revolution is to oust feudal aristocracy from political power and to create legal conditions favourable for the rapid growth of the capitalist

mode of production. Both the factors help the accomplishment of the task. The progress and the ultimate success of the revolution are determined by the maturity of both. In a later stage, still another factor enters the struggle and plays the decisive part in the realisation of the final victory. It is the working class. But that, in its turn, is conditional upon the maturity of one of the basic factors, namely, capitalism. The initial stage of the bourgeois democratic revolution in Europe, marked by the rise of the Italian Republics, was brought about mainly by the operation of capitalism. The second factor entered the list with the outbreak of the Peasant War in Germany. The third factor did not assert itself until the Great French Revolution, although it had already influenced history indirectly in England. The bourgeois democratic revolution reached the period of decisive victory only after the third factor had become actively operative.

The unevenness of the process, in which these factors attained maturity, conditioned the beginning and the tempo of development of the revolution in different countries. In some the revolution began earlier than in others, but could not go farther than a certain stage. It was even thrown back. In others it compromised with the feudal aristocracy. In the rest, it began late, but its victory was decisive. That uneven development was caused by the existence, evolution and operation of the revolutionary classes in a greater or smaller degree. The Italian Republics practically disappeared from the political scene after they had marked the beginning, because they were confined in so many cities thriving on trade carried on by a class of people having no direct connection with production which took place in other and often far off countries. They had not grown out of the dynamic surge of a peasant revolt, nor did their economic organisation contain the germs of the proletariat. They were built upon trades capital, and ceased to be the vanguard of the revolution as soon as the industrial bourgeoisie appeared on the scene elsewhere. As this new and more powerful factor came into existence in other countries, the centre of the revolution was shifted from the Italian Republics, on which dropped the curtain of history.

The Peasant War in Germany represented the maturity of the second factor involved in the bourgeois democratic revolution. It also failed to create the new order, because of the weakness of the other factor. In the early sixteenth century, capitalism was still too weak

in Central Europe to take up a decisive fight against the feudal aristocracy. So much so that its ideologist, Martin Luther, vehemently condemned the revolutionary peasant uprising. In England, feudal aristocracy saved much of its power and privileges by flirting with the fickle goddess of democracy after she had beheaded a king. Owing to that compromise, the bourgeois democratic revolution was never completed in England. The revolution was not supported by a peasant uprising, nor was the proletariat developed enough to prevent democracy from selling herself to the aristocratic gallant, and to encourage her to demand the head not of an individual, but of an entire class as was done in France one hundred years later. In France, the revolution reached the climax. All the three factors were operation. Therefore it triumphed.

The Taiping Revolt was a bourgeois democratic revolution in the stage in which it is based mainly upon one factor, the other two being still very undeveloped. It was that earlier stage of the bourgeois democratic revolution which was represented by the Peasant War in Germany. Its religious appearance and communist deviations obscured its social character for the undiscerning or prejudiced eye. Such appearance and deviations, however, are the specific features of a bourgeois democratic revolution in a certain stage, under certain conditions.

The Peasant War in Germany was also an intensely religious movement, and manifested strong tendencies to primitive communism. That was also the case with the English revolution. Those tendencies were noticed even in the numerous peasant uprisings that immediately preceded the French Revolution. The democratic character of the Taiping Revolt is disputed because it strove to set up a monarchy with a strong theocratic tinge. That resulted from the religious appearance of the movement, and would have faded away in course of time. Indeed, there was a great difference of opinion among the Taiping leaders on this question. Monarchy might not have been a transitory feature. It is not very likely that Republic would have arisen out of the Taiping Revolt, had it been successful. Complete overthrow of the monarchy, however, is not necessarily a part of the programme of bourgeois democratic revolution, so long as it does not come under the decisive influence of the working class as distinct from the peasantry. To limit the power of the monarch, to take him out of the reactionary setting of the feudal court, and to place him under

the control of the rising capitalist class—these are the aspirations of the bourgeois democratic revolution. That is so because the bourgeois democratic revolution does not disturb private property. It simply changes the relations of property. The king is the traditional symbol of private property. The abolition of kingship, therefore, is a sinister omen which frightens the goddess of bourgeois democracy. She would have happily shared the crown with the Capets, had not the Parisian proletariat put a red cap on her head, and kept her away from the corrupting atmosphere of Versailles. In all other cases, until the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the German Revolution of the following year, democracy simply constitutionalised monarchy.

Thus, it is only prejudice and ignorance of history which disputed the democratic character of the Taiping Revolt. Its monarchist tendency is justifiable from yet another point of view. In addition to being a bourgeois democratic movement, the Taiping Revolt was also a struggle for national liberation. Hence its desire to set up national monarchy in the place of the foreign dynasty. Moreover, the Taiping monarchy, notwithstanding its circumstantial theocratic tinge, was limited, for all practical purposes, though not constitutional, in the modern sense. The mistake is to take it out of the setting of history and to regard history not as a dynamic process of social evolution, but as a mechanical chronology of facts.

A recollection of the outstanding features of the Peasant War in Germany and their comparison with the main features of the Taiping Revolt makes the social and historical significance of the latter clear. They both represented the same stage of the bourgeois democratic revolution. The famous Twelve Articles of Memmingen contained such demands as limitation of feudal exactions, restoration of common land, free use of the woods for the purposes of hunting, abolition of forced labour, payment of wages for all labour performed, election of the pastor by the community, abolition of death dues payable by the peasants, and only one tax on corn. All these demands obviously were directed against the privileged position of the feudal lords, spiritual as well as temporal. Judged from the point of view of their basic significance, not only the demands of the movement but the measures introduced in the Taiping kingdom as well, were also directed against the power and privileges of the landed aristocracy. Being an acute outburst of the movement generally known as Reformation, the Peasant War in Germany was heavily coloured with

religion. One of its most outstanding leaders was the Anabaptist Thomas Muenzer. The peasants were inspired by a picture of primitive communism held out before them on the authority of the Holy Scriptures. Certain measures introduced by the Taipings were also communistic. The measures reflecting the interests of nascent capitalism, however, were more pronounced. On that token, the Taiping Revolt was even somewhat more advanced than the Peasant War in Germany. In it the second factor of the bourgeois democratic revolution, namely, capitalism, was more in operation than in its European prototype. And precisely for that reason, it held out so long and came so near to success, while the Peasant War in Germany was so short-lived. Indeed, both the first and second factors of the bourgeois democratic revolution were sufficiently mature in China when the Taiping Revolt took place. But for the imperialist intervention, the forces of revolution in China might have overwhelmed decrepit feudalism and overthrown the corrupt monarchy.

The outstanding features of the great insurrection in China were religiosity, tendency towards primitive communism, antagonism to the landowning class, fierce hatred for the Manchu dynasty, efforts to promote trade and industry, friendly attitude towards foreigners, and a general social outlook decidedly liberal as compared to the prevailing conditions of the country. Though noted for their war-likeness, the Taipings were fervent advocates of peace. The very name of their movement signified that. They named the territories under their control "Tai-Ping-tien-kuo", which means "Heavenly Empire of Peace". They were merciless towards their enemies. But once these had been overwhelmed, they introduced measures under which all could live in peace, Theirs was a brotherhood of man, inspired by certain teachings of primitive Christianity, more or less on the pattern of the English Roundheads. They proclaimed common ownership of land. Artisans produced articles which were distributed under the supervision of the State. The guiding principle of social economy was to provide equitably for all and to have a reserve for the time of war and other calamities. Educational reforms were also enforced. Under the Manchus, learning was the privilege of the official classes. In the Taiping kingdom, people's schools were opened, and even higher education was accessible to all. Opium smoking was heavily penalised; slavery was abolished, and prostitution forbidden. In religion, the Taiping movement was against idolatry; politically, it was anti-Manchu; and socially, communistic.

This brief summary of the principles, character and achievements of the Taiping insurrection clearly shows that it was essentially a democratic movement. Resembling the Peasant War in Germany in broad outlines, it nevertheless came nearer to the subsequent stages of the bourgeois democratic revolution. It fell short of the very last stages, because the proletariat was still very weak in China. On the other hand, it had to meet the opposition of an extraneous force which itself had grown out of the bourgeois democratic revolution in other countries, namely, imperialism. The weakness of the capitalist mode of production, and consequently of the class connected with it, the immaturity amounting to practical absence of the proletariat which also resulted from the inadequate development of the capitalist mode of production, and lastly foreign intervention—all these contributed to the defeat of the first great movement which objectively tended towards the creation of a modern China.

The Christian Powers, without whose aid reaction might not have triumphed in China, were shocked by Hung Hsiu-tsung's[1] claim to divine inspiration. They considered it to be a flagrant violation of Christianity, a quaint version of which the rebels professed. The Christian missionaries looked upon him as a heretic like Jeanne d'Arc, and had the governments of their respective countries stamp him out as barbarously and unscrupulously as England had done with the mediaeval apostle of French nationalism. Many other fore-runners of the bourgeois democratic revolution in Europe also claimed to act on scriptural authority and under divine inspiration. Towards the end of the fifteenth century, Hans Boehm led the attack against mediaeval social order, reared upon the twin pillars of the Church and feudalism, claiming to have received the mission directly from Virgin Mary. Tha wide-spread peasant revolts, which constituted the background of the Reformation, also claimed divine ordinance from Virgin Mary and Saint John. Muenzer led the rebellious peasantry in a war of death and destruction equally with the belief that he was obeying the will of God communicated directly to him. And finally, Oliver Cromwell declared that he had personal counsel with, and received direct communication from, God. He should have been sent to the stake as a heretic. In view of these facts, it is evident that the charge against the Taiping emperor that he was profaning the Christian Scriptures was only a pretext for a very mundane action on the part of the Christian Powers. It was a pretext for crushing a

movement, the essentially progressive and democractic character of which markedly counter-balanced its transitory mediaeval and superstitious features.

Even some of the Christian missionaries and European observers were themselves forced to recognise the progressive and democratic character of the Taiping movement. The English missionary Medhurst, who visited Nanking and saw the Taipings in action from close quarters, wrote: "The advantages to be anticipated from the success of the insurgents are the opening of the country to religious and commercial enterprise, and the introduction of scientific developments which will benefit both the giver and the receiver. It would be sad to see Christian nations engaged in putting down the movement, as the insurgents possess an energy and a tendency to improvement and general reform. Should the imperialists (Manchus), unaided by foreigners, prevail over the insurgents, of which there seems little probability, they would become much more exclusive and insolent."[2] That is the evidence of an eye-witness who had no reason to be preju- -diced in favour of the rebels. The evidence clearly proves the democratic character of the rebellion. The religious preoccupation and communistic deviations were but passing features, growing out of the general social and cultural setting in which the movement took place. In course of time, they were sure to be over-whelmed by the basic force of the revolution, which was the new mode of production seeking the freedom of development. That development would surely bring in its train an expansion of trade, political progress, liberal social outlook and disappearance of religious superstition.

Another foreign observer, who visited the Taiping capital as the interpreter of the first British Expedition (1853), found the insurgents to be men who were free from the feudal haughtiness which was such a pronounced characteristic of the Chinese imperial officials. He reported that the rebel leaders were men "who had all the natural sagacity and all the acquired knowledge that was requisite to the organisation of a potent government system." He found among them "men who have been able to get an education, but are now at once poor, ambitious and friendless; men once wealthy as well as learned, but who have been ruined by Mandarin oppression; and men who have education, friends and competence, but who have inherited a revenge."[3]

Obviously, the class of people whom Meadows found at the

head of affairs in the Taiping capital, were the typical fore-runners of the modern bourgeoisie. Neither religious fanaticism nor inclination to primitive communism could be the inner conviction of such men. Those impediments were imposed upon them by their followers. They generally hailed from the trading class, well-to-do artisans ruined by feudal exactions, and intellectuals who could not climb up the social scale owing to the reservation of all positions of honour for the scions of the feudal aristocracy. In short, they represented a social stratum which, in such a period of transition, produces the ideologists and leaders of the revolution. The Taiping emperor himself was a specimen of the type described by Meadows.

Hung Hsiu-tsung was born in a Kwangtung peasant family. Besides his basic occupation, his father was the teacher of the village school. He desired his son to rise still higher in the social scale. He sent him to Canton for getting education preparatory to the entrance into the Civil Service. Two experiences in Canton seem to have influenced the life of the young man: his acquaintance with Christian missionaries and his failure in the Civil Service examination. The obstacle to the realisation of his ambition naturally made him bitter towards the Mandarins, which feeling found its expression in the desire to organise a popular movement against the established order. In an elementary version of Christianity, he found the ideology for the movement he wanted to start. In an agitated state of mind, he fell sick. It is quite an explicable psychological phenomenon that, in the delirium of his sickness, he had dreams which provided the basis of the Taiping faith. He dreamt that an old man came to him to present a sword which would slay the oppressors of the people. After that experience, he was ready to begin his crusade against idolatry and feudalism.

Much has been written about the role of Christianity in bringing about the Taiping movement. It has also been maintained that the movement degenerated when it deviated from the orthodox teachings of Christianity. As a matter of fact, the connection between Christianity and the Taiping movement was rather accidental. The iconoclasm of the Taipings was not exactly of Christian origin. Moreover, Christianity itself is hardly iconoclastic. Anti-idolatry was a specific feature of the social upheaval which the Taiping insurrection represented. The anti-idolatry of the Taipings was the Reformation of China; it was an integral part of the coming bourgeois democratic

revolution. The Christian missionaries criticised the superstitions of the Chinese religion; the Taipings also challenged the religion of the ruling class. That was the point of contact between the two. There was no organic relation. The anti-idolatry of the Taipings did not represent any spiritual indebtedness to Christianity. It was inseparable from the social character and historical significance of the movement itself.

Whatever may be the explanation of the events of his youth and of his dream, Hung Hsiu-tsung did not create the movement. On the contrary, he was the product of the then prevailing conditions out of which grew the great movement he headed. He represented the class which formulated the ideology and provided the leadership of the insurrection. The fact that his agitation and propaganda found a response from the poor peasantry indicated the basis of the movement. It is recorded that with his disciples and associates he travelled all the way to the heart of Kwangsi to find sufficient response to his preachings. He had to approach the poorest strata of the peasantry to find materials ripe for the insurrection.

The class antagonism, which broke out in the form of the Taip-ing Revolution, was not exclusively as between the feudal aristocracy and the peasantry. The latter itself was split up into two factions. The territories at the junction of the three provinces, Kwangtung, Kwangsi and Human, where the movement first began, were inhabited by aboriginal tribes before the Chinese came from the north in the early middle-ages. There were two tides of immigration, separated by several hundred years. Those who came first took possession of the best land, and within the formal limits of feudal-patriarchal relations grew into a class of comparatively well-to-do peasantry. They looked askance upon those coming later, and exploited them either as tenants or sub-tenants or even as wage-labourers. Owing to the fact that much of the good land had already been occupied, the newcomers took more to handicraft as a subsidiary occupation. Thus, there grew up a distinct line of class demarcation between the old settlers who called themselves "puntes" (natives), and the newcomers who were branded as "hakkas" (strangers). The rural population was similarly divided throughout the southern provinces. The exploited and expropriated "hakkas" often revolted against the powerful alliance of the feudal-patriarchal State, rich landlords and well-to-do peasants. Beaten by a superior force, and entirely without any productive means

of livelihood, they wandered over the country as "bandits". Many ventured out to the sea as pirates, and infested the Chinese coast during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Those on land naturally took to the mountainous regions which provided them some protection against the government forces. Kwangsi being very mountainous, accessible with great difficulty, became the home of the "brigands". It was to Kwangsi that the would-be leaders of Taiping went to find their base of operation.

As soon as a sufficiently large number of expropriated peasants rallied around him, Hung Hsiu-tsung captured the little town of Liu-tchu in 1850. There he was declared the spiritual and temporal head of the "Kingdom of Peace" to come. The social position of his followers earned for Hung the title of the "Coolie Wang"—the Proletarian King. The name was conferred on him disdainfully by the Mandarins.

The first act of the insurgents was to destroy the temples which contained the records of landholding. Like the Catholic Church in mediaeval Europe, the temples in China also were the pillars of feudal absolutism. Therefore, the rebellious peasantry attacked the temples and destroyed the tablets of the ancestors which constituted the badge of patriarchal power in the village. The cardinal principles of their programme were formulated by the insurgents in the embryonic kingdom at the obscure town of Kwangsi. They were: overthrow of the foreign Manchu dynasty; religious reform through the eradication of idolatry; and return to the primitive communist organisation of society. The first meant an attack upon the feudal order represented by the ruling dynasty; the second meant the overthrow of patriarchal power; and the third signified the striving for a new social order which, when the other two points of the programme were realised, was sure to be something entirely different from that conceived in the primitive ideology of the insurgents.

In Liu-tchu, the Taiping Wang composed the famous Ode which contained the ideology of the revolt.

"When in the present time disturbances abound
"And bands of robbers are like gathering vapours found,
"We know that Heaven means to raise a valiant hand
"To rescue the oppressed and save our native land.
"China was once subdued, but it shall never fall;
"God ought to be adored, and ultimately shall.

"The founder of the Ming in song discloses his mind,
"The Emperor of Han drank to the furious wind.
"From olden times, all deeds by energy were done,
"Dark vapours disappear on rising of the sun."[4]

This basic piece of Taiping literature has been subjected to various interpretations. The author and his deeds have been dammed or deified on its authority. One thing, however, is clear: The voice of the down-trodden masses of China rings through this picturesque poem. It is tinged with nationalism, and harks back to the mythical Golden Age, both of which sentiments reflected the conditions of the epoch. Freedom from the Tartar invaders was an ideal easily understandable and fully justifiable. And the wistful glance at the past! Did not the ideologists of the European bourgeoisie also do the same, even when the latter had gone well ahead on the way of building up a new social order, entirely different from the "Golden Age" of the past?

Divested of its religious terminology, the Taiping Ode clearly refers to the expropriated and insurgent poor peasantry as the saviours of the land. For the first time, they were not looked upon as a curse upon society—as "bandits" and "brigands"—but were glorified as the indicator of the Heavenly Will. The Ode clearly contained the ideology of a peasant uprising, and as such was the harbinger of a bourgeois democratic revolution.

A glance at the conditions of the country during the decades preceding the rise of the Taipings reveals how broad and deep was the foundation of the movement. Already in the closing years of the eighteenth century, the so-called "White Lily Society" had organised rebellion which spread through many outlying provinces, and for a time affected even Central China. The movement had an anti-Manchu appearance, but judged by its social composition and the reforms demanded, it was a peasant revolt. Taking place soon after the capture of the Crown by a foreign dynasty, which presently reconciled the opposition of the native feudal aristocracy by virtue of social affinity, all outbursts of class struggle in the backward social conditions of those days were bound to lend themselves to anti-dynastic, nationalist, sentiments. Essentially, they were struggles of the oppressed peasantry against Chinese feudal absolutism, and objectively heralded the rise of the bourgeoisie to build up a new social order on the basis of the capitalist mode of production. The "White Lily"

rebellion had been preceded by the appearance and extensive operations of the formidable "Triad Society", also known as the "Society of Heaven and Earth" (San Ho Huy).

The power of the Manchu conquerors was easily consolidated in the northern provinces, where feudalism was not weakened by the relics of patriarchalism, and where a class of well-to-do peasantry had developed as the bulwark of reaction. The invading dynasty found there a social base. But it was not so easy to subjugate the South where conditions were so very different. In the absence of transport facilities, great distances rendered military operation extremely difficult. Only important centres could be occupied. The country at large resisted the penetration of Manchu power. In the southern provinces, owing to the weakness of feudalism, and thanks to the historical fact that trade relations with foreign countries had mostly been from Canton,[5] there had arisen the fore-runners of the modern bourgeoisie, who were not to be so easily reconciled with the Manchu absolutism as the Chinese feudal aristocracy and the rich peasantry of the North. Moreover, the patriarchal structure of agricultural economy had led to the destitution of large masses of peasantry, who rose in open revolt from time to time, and when defeated, took to banditry or piracy. All those factors together kept the southern provinces in a state of perennial discontent and disturbance which was very fertile for anti-dynastic agitation.

The powerful Triad Society incorporated all those factors of disturbance. Its main source of strength was the so-called bandits on land and pirates on sea. In spite of the general hostility to the foreign ruling dynasty, the rich upper classes (landlords, government officials and traders), even in the South, could eventually be won over as against a revolutionary movement primarily based upon so subversive a social element as the expropriated and pauperised peasantry. Consequently, the Triad Society together with similar organisations of agrarian revolt were forced underground—a state of existence very encouraging for superstitious mysticism and mediaeval romanticism. The Triad Society was organised on the principles of fraternity and strict secrecy. It marked the beginning of the agrarian secret societies which abounded in China all along until to-day.

After the advent of the Manchus, popular uprisings came to be very frequent in China. They thrived in the conditions of social dissolution which prevailed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries

as the consequence of the decay of feudalism and the slow growth of a new mode of production. Unable to suppress those uprisings which commanded the sympathy of the great bulk of the population, the Manchu rulers adopted the policy of winning over the rebel leaders through bribe. So marked was the solicitude of the rulers to placate the rebel leaders that some superficial foreign observers set up the tbeory that to rebel against the constituted authority was not illegal in China.[6] The solicitude, however, did not represent recognition of the "sacred right of revolt". It only betrayed the weakness of the central authority, and the revelation encouraged further spread of the revolt even when some of its leaders were bought over.

The insurrections, so frequent and widespread during the decades preceding the Taiping Revolt, were all of an outspoken class character, although tinged with an anti-dynastic complexion. Meadows describes the object of these insurrections as follows: "Even these appeals to force are, however, as first not rebellious movements, but merely local insurrections, having for their ultimate object the death of a certain mandarin." In other words, in the state of general ferment and discontent, the oppressed peasantry responded to the anti-dynastic agitation, but were more concerned with their immediate demands which included limitation of the power of the local feudal-patriarchal tyrants. Such peasant revolts against feudal absolutism were very widespread; for practical purposes, the central authority was defied everywhere; but the movement was not yet mature enough to assault the feudal State with the object of capturing supreme political power. The Taiping Revolution represented the attainment of that state of maturity. It was the culmination of the tide of peasant revolt which had been rising and gathering strength for decades preceding it.

The preparatory stages of the Taiping Revolt being dismissed as mere banditry and piracy, the revolutionary character of that great movement could not be appreciated by most of its historians, either native or foreign. It was regarded as one of the sporadic outbursts which always infested China, only of an unprecedented magnitude and tenacity. Indeed, the earlier stages of the remarkable revolutionary democratic movement in China were purposely branded as "banditry and piracy". That was done by foreign writers to provide justification for the eventual imperialist intervention, but for which criminal act China might to-day be a modern democratic country. Foreign writers

characterised the insurgents as "pests", and declared that their extermination was a part of the civilising mission of the Christian Powers. Referring to the Chinese word "Tsih" which was wrongly translated, one of them, however, made the following highly interesting observation: "Its mistranslation into 'robbers and bandits' has been, and is likely to be, the cause of a mistaken and most mischievous interference in Chinese internal politics." He pointed out that the Chinese word has a much more comprehensive meaning. It is "all persons who set the authorities at defiance by acquisitive acts of violence".[7] The writer was an interpreter, and is reputed to have had a perfect knowledge of the Chinese language.

Evidently, contemporary Chinese observers did not make any mistake about the social and political character of the widespread forces of disturbance which culminated in the Taiping Revolt. No such mistake could be possibly made in view of the fact that numerous bands of peasant insurgents, carrying on a continuous struggle against the ruling class, ultimately combined themselves into a mighty movement which swept the entire country. The oppressed peasantry in a certain district would revolt; troops would be rushed there: usually, the first outbreak would be suppressed. As the suppression of the revolt was invariably followed by brutal massacres, the defeated insurgents would take to the neighbouring mountainous regions, where they could not be easily attacked by the government forces. From the position of retreat, they would continue their operations against the constituted authority, and rob the rich people of the neighbouring territories for their maintenance. Those insurgent peasants and plebeians rallied under the Taiping banner when it was first raised in the mountainous districts of Kwangsi. The slogan with which the embryonic revolutionary State was established in the small town of Liutchu, naturally reflected the sentiments and demands of the exploited, down-trodden and destitute masses. They had been mercilessly driven out of their homes and deprived of their land by the exactions of the landlords and gentry. They could have no respect for religious institutions supporting the power and privileges of their oppressors. How could they any longer worship the idols and pray at the temples which had so signally failed to keep their traditional trust—to see to it that the land inherited from Heaven, through the immortal ancestors, provided the means of subsistence to the entire community? The mandarins sucked the life-blood of

the people and called in troops to massacre them when they rebelled. They acted as the representatives of the Manchu dynasty. Hence the hatred for the mandarins. The revolutionary State of the Taipings professed Communism, because the expropriated peasants, who supported it, wanted their land back; but, unable to foresee a better system under which it could be bad securely, they dreamed of communal ownership. The tradition of the primitive communal ownership was still alive. The peasants desired re-establishment of the traditional system, only freed from the trust of the gods and temples—the custodians of communal ownership who had betrayed their trust.

The conditions of dissatisfaction and revolt, maturing over a whole period of time, finally received an additional impetus from the consequences of the Anglo-Chinese war of 1839-40. Disbanded soldiers could not find employment; they also became "bandits"; that is, they swelled the ranks of the insurgent peasantry. The crushing defeat in the war with a foreign Power seriously impaired the prestige of the ruling dynasty. Its weakness was further revealed. The inability of the Government to check the economic ruin of the country, caused by the constant drain of silver in payment for opium, confronted also the middle-classes with the necessity of changing the administrative system of the country. The social basis of the revolution was thus broadened. The bourgeoisie began to look at the rebellious peasantry as a possible instrument for the realisation of their ambition to replace the effetefeudal aristocracy as the ruling class. Conditions were getting worse every day.

In 1846-47, the provinces of Hunan, Kwangsi and Kwangtung were visited by a famine. Destitute masses, in thousands, joined the "bandits". The general atmosphere was of the collapse of the State machinery, the corruption of the ruling class, the stagnation of national economy, the dislocation of social relations, and disorder in every department of national life. A revolution could never be more imminent. Indeed, it was inevitable. The revolutionary nature of the Taiping Uprising is undeniable in view of these historical facts.

The extraordinary swiftness of the spread of the insurrection testified to its being a spontaneous popular upheaval. Within three years, beginning at the obscure town of remote Kwangsi, it reached the heart of the country, having spread like wild fire through the vast provinces of Hunan, Hupeh, Kiangsi and Anhwei. It occupied such important political and economic centres as Changsha, Woochang,

Hanyang and other Yangtse ports. In the beginning, the revolutionary army was no more than ten thousand strong. It swelled to over a hundred thousand when it captured Nanking. It swept away government troops like "broken reeds before a surging tide". Undoubtedly, such a spectacular triumph would not be possible without widespread and enthusiastic popular support.

As soon as the revolutionary government was established at Nanking, an expedition was despatched to capture Peking. In half a year, the expedition reached the neighbourhood of Tientsin. There the revolution entered territory where the conditions were less favourable than in the South. On the one hand, the comparatively rich peasants of the North gave it only a lukewarm support. On the other hand, nearer to the capital, the revolutionary army met greater and more effective resistance from the government forces.

The "Tai-Ping-tien-kuo" (Heavenly Empire of Peace), with its headquarters at Nanking, was established over a territory embracing nine provinces; that is, nearly half of the country with a population of approximately two-hundred millions. It still professed the socio-economic principles formulated in the earlier stages of the movement. It was a gigantic brotherhood. One of the first edicts of the revolutionary government was: "Having fields, let them cultivate together; and when they get rice, let them eat it together; so also with regard to clothes and money; let them use them in common, so that everyone may share and share alike, and everyone be equally well-fed and clothed."[8] The striving to re-establish primitive communism was still there. But in course of its phenomenal development, the revolution had transgressed the limits it had set for itself in the remote corner of Kwangsi, inhabited by primitive peasants. Victorious expansion had placed before it tasks of a more complicated nature, and the revolutionary State proved itself competent to cope with them.

After it had dealt such a staggering blow to the decayed structure of the feudal society, the revolution assumed, objectively, if not as yet quite consciously, the historic task of building up a new social order on the ruins of the old. It might still profess the desire to resurrect primitive communism, a profession which reflected the sentiment of the backward masses supporting it. But that desire was sure to vanish in proportion as the revolution would grasp the real nature of its tasks. The constructive task of the revolution could not

be accomplished, should its social basis remain confined to the pauperised peasantry. It must draw other classes into its ranks. And those classes would not subscribe to the programme of primitive communism. It has been testified by contemporary observers that the leaders of the movement hailed mostly from the non-agrarian classes. Although they professed belief in communal ownership, their objective social outlook was entirely different; it was in the direction of the development of society on the basis of a still higher form of private property.

As soon as the initial stages of the revolution were accomplished under the captivating banner of a mediaeval religious brotherhood, it began to outgrow the limits of primitive communism, and manifest clear tendencies towards bourgeois democracy. Trade flourished in the Taiping capital, and artisans received encouragement to increase production. By the abolition of feudal dues and the introduction of a moderate taxation, peasants were induced to improve the methods of cultivation and thereby iucrease the productivity of land. The barrier tax seriously hindered a free exchange of commodities. It was abolished in territories controlled by the revolutionary government. The result was a great expansion of trade. The export of tea and silk from the Yangtse Valley increased during the time it was occupied by the insurgents. Engaged in a protracted war with superior forces, practically throughout its existence, the revolutionary government was, of course, obliged to impose heavy taxation. But the greater part of the burden fell upon those who could bear it. Although the peasants could not be altogether spared, they were much better oif than under the Manchus. In spite of the emergencies of the revolutionary war, the produce of land was purchased from the peasants at a fair price. On the other hand, under the supervision of the State, urban artisans manufactured articles which could be freely exchanged with the surplus production of the peasants. Inside a social organisation, having the appearance of a religious brotherhood, the capitalist mode of production received all possible encouragement.

Having emphasised upon its unavoidable destructive aspects, prejudiced or hostile historians kept its positive achievements out of common knowledge. A movement for the overthrow of an old social order must inevitably be destructive. The Taipings, indeed, were merciless in dealing with the feudal aristocracy and Manchu

officials. But the other side of the picture was hardly ever presented by the average chronicler. Many of them were indeed so very blinded by prejudice that they themselves failed to perceive it. But there were exceptions. A French missionary, who travelled widely through the rebel territories, wrote at the end of 1852: "The people do not conceal their desire for the advent ef the insurgents; and there is not a village but what would gladly come under their government. The rebels pursue a course of conduct truly wise. They abstain from pillage and make no trouble. On capturing a town, they give no quarter to the Tartar soldiers; they put to death the Manchu mandarins without mercy; and they also massacre the Chinese mandarins. But they respect the mass of the people; the merchant is left undisturbed in his affairs; and the traveller is permitted to continue his route in peace. In my journey, the sum and substance of what I hear was this: Would that the rebels of the South might come here !"[9]

From the very beginning, the insurgents were quite friendly to the foreigners, and prepared to give them freedom of trade on condition that they did not help the Manchu. Therefore, the act of the Christian Powers helping the suppression of the revolutionary movement was entirely uncalled for and thoroughly outrageous. The friendly attitude of the Taipings towards the foreigners brought into clear relief the progressive character of the movement. The interest of the classes involved in the movement would not be injured by an expansion of trade, provided that the expansion took place simultaneously with, and in consequence of, a radical readjustment of social relations inside the country. Such a readjustment demanded in the first place the overthrow of Manchu absolutism. Therefore, the insurgent government was fully entitled to stipulate that foreigners should pledge themselves not to support the ruling dynasty in return for the freedom of trade and movement granted to them voluntarily. Subsequent events proved that the apprehension of the revolutionary government about the intentions of the foreigners was not unfounded.

It was not the interests of the Chinese people alone which demanded that foreigners should be allowed freedom of trade only under a pledge. The insurgents were not alone in asking the foreigners not to support the reactionary Chinese ruling class. Meadows, for example, wrote the following on the eve of the foreigners' taking side against the revolution: "Those who believe that the extension of

commerce, the progress of civilisation, the diffusion of religion and the gradual approach towards universal and lasting peace are indis-solubly connected—that they must together be forwarded, or together be retarded—will do their best to see that the present struggle in China is not interfered with."

Those were wise and prophetic words, pronounced by a bourgeois liberal. They represent a very damaging verdict against colonialism, pronounced by one of its early ideologists. As a freetrader, Meadows was an advocate of modern imperialism. But he failed to understand the contradiction inherent in the rising system. Suppression of the Taiping Revolution was an essential condition for the colonisation of China. A free exchange of commodities with China, on the terms of the revolutionary government, would have contributed to the final success of the revolution. Manchu abolutism would have been destroyed; the social reaction it stood for would have been overthrown; and a modern democratic China would have been born. If those things were allowed to happen, the imperialist conquest of China would be very problematical, if not impossible. Therefore, the Christian Powers did not listen to the well-meaning advice of muddle-headed liberals like Meadows, and acted just as imperialism by its very nature must do.

If the Christian Powers were sincere in their profession, they should have helped the insurgents. 'When, in October 1856, the British fleet, in conjunction with the French, was bombarding Canton, ostensibly to establish the right of free trade, the Taipings approached the foreigners with a proposal for an alliance against the Manchus. They asked for a loan in return for the right sought by the foreigners. But they were rebuffed. The British officers pretended to be neutral—a neutrality which before long was abandoned in favour of reaction. The object of the repeated acts of imperialist aggression in China was to force the corrupt and decrepit feudal ruling class to make concession after concession to the foreign invaders, who, in their turn, undertook to help the decayed reaction remain in power as far as the internal affairs of the country were concerned. Such conditions were necessary for subjecting the Chinese masses to the worst form of colonial exploitation. The right to exchange commodities, without let or hindrance, could be had from the revolutionaries, but they would not concede those rights to the extent of forfeiting the political sovereignty and territorial

integrity of the nation. A progressive democratic government, established upon the final triumph of the revolution, would be as strong and popular as the Manchus were weak and detested. The rise of such a government in China would obviously be a check for imperialist designs.

Soon after the revolutionary government was established at Nanking, England, France and the United States of America sent expeditions to see what sort of conditions prevailed under the insurgents. The reports were contradictory. The American commissioner, Robert McLane, who visited Nanking in the middle of 1854, reported very unfavourably for the rebels. In his opinion, the rebels "are composed almost exclusively of the ignorant and unenlightened population in the interior. Whatever may have been the hopes of enlightened and civilised nations of the earth in regard to this movement, it is now apparent that they neither profess nor apprehend Christianity, and whatever may be the true judgment to form of their political power, it can no longer be doubted that intercourse cannot be established or maintained on terms of equality." With all the haughtiness and prejudice, which heavily coloured the report, it gives away some truths about the situation. Firstly, the rebellion was not a court intrigue but a great popular movement; secondly, it was not actuated by a fanatic belief in a distorted version of Christianity; it was a dynamic outburst of revolutionary social forces; and thirdly, the revolutionary government was powerful. Being still novices in imperialist adventure, the Americans did not know how to judge the situation correctly. They were more intolerant than others with greater experience. It is memorable that subsequently foreigners began their direct attack upon the revolution through the instrumentality of an American Adventurer.

The report of the British commissioner, Sir George Bonharn, was very carefully prepared with the help of the Christian missionary Dr. Medhurst, who spoke the Chinese language and knew the country very well. He recommended the policy of wait and see. He admitted that foreigners would get many advantages, should the rebels succeed; nevertheless, he advocated neutrality towards them. It is reported that the English as well as other visitors, who observed the minimum standard of decorum and decency, were received by the rebels as "foreign brothers". They were offered complete freedom of trade and movement throughout the Taiping Empire, only on one condi-

tion—not to help the Machus. That was a very liberal offer. To assume the non-committal attitude of neutrality in the face of such an offer represented the desire to accept the offer without any condition. The state of affairs found by the foreign visitors in the revolutionary centre was convincing as regards the character of the movement. It was certainly not of such a nature as could be possibly backed up against the Manchus, to take the latter's place as a pliable tool in the hands of foreign Powers. With all the advantages the movement immediately offered, it decidedly represented a powerful effort to abolish conditions with rendered China easily accessible to imperialist exploitation. Therefore, the upstarts must go. The prudent policy recommended by the more experienced agent of British Imperialism differed from that of the haughty, intolerant, hair-brained American jingo only in that it suggested to wait and see if the Manchus could do the dirty job. The hands of the Christian Powers need not be unnecessarily soiled. Meanwhile, be neutral, since the rebels commanded the trade route of the Yangtse.

Although the rebels could not be successful in the North, the efforts of the imperial forces to dislodge them from the places they had occupied were abortive. They laid siege upon the rebel headquarters at Nanking throughout the eleven years (from 1853-64) of its existence. But it was a fiasco. The revolutionary government conducted affairs in its extensive territories from the beleaguered capital. The reason of that surprising situation was that the soldiers of the besieging army sympathised with the rebels, and let them pass freely in and out of the city. They even delivered to the rebels arms and ammunition for small consideration. Many of them deserted the imperial army and joined the insurgents. The revolutionary government could easily induce the corrupt imperial officers to supply food to the city they were supposed to besiege.

While the Taipings were still gathering strength in the remote province of Kwangsi, there developed in the south-eastern maritime provinces a formidable peasant uprising. After the conclusion of the first Anglo-Chinese war, thousands of soldiers went away with their fire-arms. They represented a great accession of strength for the secret revolutionary societies which had existed in the regions ever since the Manchu invasion. The result was an open uprising which spread throughout the provinces of Kwang-tung. Kiangsi and Chekiang. To prevent the capture of Shanghai by the revolutionary

peasant army, commanded by Tien Te, the British and French fleets bombarded the coast. But the "fire ships" and "blazing gourds" could not check the advance of the rebels. They reached Shanghai in 1853. In that very year, the Taipings captured Nanking from the other side.

Not desiring to provoke the foreign Powers, the Taipings left Shanghai alone. But it wai attacked by insurgent peasants from the southern maritime provinces. The occupation of Shanghai by the rebels from the South provided the foreigners with the pretext to seize the right of collecting the customs revenue, ostensibly in behalf of the Chinese Central Government.

Thanks to its situation at the mouth of the main artery of trade, the great Yangtse, Shanghai was replacing Canton as the centre of imperialist activities. It was threatened to be caught in a vice by two mighty tides of revolution surging from the South and West. The foreigners immediately organised themselves into a volunteer army and fortified their settlement. Upon the capture of the city by the rebels, the Manchu officials fled to the fortified foreign settlement, where they received protection. The customs house was also removed to the British Concession. At that time, the Collector of Maritime Customs at Shanghai was a Hong merchant from Canton, a most corrupt type of Manchu official, He was easily bribed into signing an agreement with the British, Americans and French, transferring the collection of the customs duties to a foreign commission. That act of wanton robbery was justified on the ground that corruption and incompetence of the Chinese officials disorganised trade. But it represented a flgrant violation of Chinese sovereignty. The corrupt official, who signed away to foreigners the control over an important item of State revenue, had no competence to do so. The agreement was never ratified by the Chinese Government. Subsequently, the Chinese Government recognised the accomplished fact, but only under duress—when it was forced to sign the next series of unequal and dictated treaties upon its defeat in the war of 1860. Corrupt practices of the Chinese officials served as the pretext for imperialist aggression: those practices were encouraged by the Christian Powers when they could be used for imperialist purposes. Not honesty, but hypocrisy proved to be the best policy.

The imperialist Powers openly participated in the suppression of the insurrection in the maritime provinces. Their professed neutrality

towards the Taipings had also been thoroughly hypocritical from the very beginning. Neutrality was a policy of catching fish in troubled waters. The customs revenue of Shanghai, for example, was a very large fish. But the imperialist Powers violated their own neutrality by supplying war materials to one combatant. As the reward for handing over the Shanghai customs to the imperialists, the corrupt Manchu official, Woo, received from them ample supplies to equip an expedition against the Taiping capital. The "neutral" foreign settlement of Shanghai became the base of operation of the imperial forces against the insurgents. Woo wanted ships for transporting his troops. No ship under the flag of a major foreign Power was lent to him. But out of the customs revenue robbed by the Christian Powers, money was given to him to hire or purchase Portuguese vessels.[10] Before long, the counter-revolutionary policy of the foreigners became still more manifest. "England and France were fighting the Manchus in the North in 1860, but gradually it became clear that they would aid the imperialists (Manchus) in the South."[11]

Intervention through the instrumentality of corrupt and incompetent Manchu officials did not prove very effective. But the Powers were still reluctant to intervene formally. Active intervention, therefore, began on the initiative of private individuals burning with the zeal to fight the rebels on the pretext that they were desecrating Christianity. Christian missionaries went to Nanking to report about the "godlessness" of the rebels, In spite of the fact that the visitors were received at the revolutionary capital as "brother", they did not fail to make the desired reports, contradicting those made by previous visitors. Gruesome stories about the "irreligiousness", "brutality" and "degeneration" of the insurgents were broadcast. On the other hand, European adventurers, unemployed sailors and desperados in Shanghai, were encouraged, and provided with the means to organise the notorious Foreign Legion under the command of an American adventurer—Frederic Townsend Ward. That bandit army, which eventually saved China for native reaction and foreign imperialism, was financed from the customs revenue of Shanghai.

Shanghai became the base of operation against the revolutionary government. It threatened to become the centre of a greater storm. It could no longer be left alone. The revolutionary government felt the necessity of occupying it. The position was indeed very anomalous. It was intolerable. Only a sincere desire on the part of

the revolutionary government to have friendly relations with the foreigners had persuaded it to tolerate the situation for such a long time. The entire Yangtse Valley was controlled by the revolutionaries. Foreigners were permitted to trade there freely, except when they were caught actually carrying contraband for the counterrevolutionary troops. But the customs duties, levied on that large volume of trade transacted in the revolutionary territories, were not only foreited to the revolutionary government, but actually supplied the sinews of war against it.

In 1860 the revolutionary army began operations for the capture of Shanghai. Before long it became practically a beleaguered city. The revolutionary peasants from the South had been expelled from the city itself after they had been in possession of it from 1853 to 1856. The British and French fleet had driven them from the coast, but they were not destroyed. They remained a force to contend with not very far from Shanghai, ready to return whenever a favourable moment arrived. When the Taipings at last began their operations, Shanghai was cut off from the hinterland practically on all sides. In that precarious situation, the undertaking of the American adventurer Ward naturally received unlimited support from all quarters. "Patriotic associations of merchants and bankers, the foreigner and the native with equal readiness, tendered their aid in support of the central authority, not so much that the foreign residents desired the aggrandisement of the Manchus, but rather because they saw all their material interests to be imperilled, and even civilisation itself to be at stake. They promptly offered money and gun-boats and artillery, and enlisted in drill clubs for the defence of Shanghai, and they were pleased to observe that the gun-boats, when Ward was on board, lost no time in coming to close quarters with the rebels."[12]

At last the unholy alliance against the revolution was openly formed. It was composed of the corrupt, decayed and discredited feudal-patriarchal monarchy, the predatory foreign imperialism, and the reactionary parasitic native Hong merchants, closely connected with the latter. That was a formidable combination against the revolutionary democratic movement which, with all its great triumphs in the beginning, was still very immature in its social composition, political programme and organisational solidity. A similar alliance nearly crushed the Great French Revolution. Therefore, it is no wonder that the Taiping Revolution failed after a great struggle which

came so near to final triumph.

The war in the North ended in a catastrophic defeat of the Manchus. The European forces of invasion occupied Peking, and the Manchus were compelled to concede all the demands of the invaders. The new treaty opened the Yangtse ports to foreign trade. Britain was granted valuable concessions at Chinkiang, Hankow and Kiukiang. That new "Treaty Right" brought the Christian Powers into direct conflict with the Taiping Government. From the very beginning the latter had agreed to grant foreigners complete freedom of trade on terms of equality. But its very existence was an objective limitation to freedom of trade as the imperialists interpreted it, that is to say, to the colonial exploitation of China.[13] Therefore, upon the satisfactory conclusion of the war against the Manchus, the foreign Powers openly set about to deal firmly with the objective menace to their aggressive designs. Once the truculent Manchus were completely cowered, and made every concession demanded by foreign imperialism, the policy of the latter came to support them openly against the revolution.

With all the ready support he got officially and privately in the beginning, Ward could do little to check the advance of the revolutionary army, which reached within three miles of the Shanghai waterfront in 1862. Thereupon, the foreigners discarded their hypocritical mask of neutrality which they had never really observed. A thirty miles-wide belt of Chinese territory encircling Shanghai was declared to be neutral zone. The revolutionary army was warned off from it. The Chinese quarters of Shanghai could not be approached without touching that arbitrarily created "neutral zone". Therefore, its creation was an open act of belligerence on the part of the foreign Powers. The rebels had succeeded in raising the siege of their capital for all practical purposes. They had occupied the entire province of Chekiang, coming in direct contact with the insurgent peasants of the South. They had captured the important port of Ningpo and also the strategic city of Soochow, commanding Shanghai. All that meant a direct threat to the position of imperialism. The latter could no longer operate indirectly, under the cover of fraudulent neutrality. In that tense situation, the Manchu monarchy receded to the background as a mere shadow of reaction. The issue was clearly between the revolution and foreign imperialism. Ever since those fateful days the latter has stood at the vanguard of all the forces of reaction in China.

Ward died before the "ever victorious army" organised by him came anywhere near victory. The foreign legion, formerly operating as a part of the Chinese Imperial Army, became an undisguised army of foreign intervention when, on the death of Ward, its leadership was taken over by the "Chinese Gordon" who acted on the orders of the Commander of the British fleet. Under Gordon the army of intervention was fully supplied with the most up-to-date weapons. In cooperation with the foreign fleets, it played the leading part in crushing the revolution, the task in which the forces of native reaction had completely failed. In 1863 Nanking was attacked from three sides: The army commanded by Gordon advanced from Shanghai. A Franco-Chinese army, commanded by French officers, operated from the base at Ningpo which was protected by foreign fleets. Lastly, there was the Chinese Imperial Army coming up the Yangtse under the command of Tseng Kwo-fan. In those days of decisive events, Li Hung-chang came down to Shanghai and received the unconditional support of the foreigners for his attempt to save the tottering monarchy. Nanking fell in 1864 after the revolutionary government established there had defied the power of the Manchus for eleven years, and extended its authority over nine vast provinces.

It is crystal clear to any unprejudiced student of history that foreign intervention was solely responsible for the defeat of the revolution." The brutal massacre that followed the occupation of important Taiping centres was not surpassed even by the slaughter after the fall of the Paris Commune. It is idle for the Christian Powers to plead not guilty of that wholesale butchery. Had they not willingly aided the suppression of the revolution, the massacre would not have taken place. The defeated insurgents were butchered under the order of Li Hung-chang and Tseng Kwo-fan. Those notorious reactionaries were in ultimate contact with the foreign Powers.

A brief review of the situation in the whole country revealed that the suppression of the Taiping Revolt represented a criminal outrage upon a free development of the Chinese people. The review shows that the Taiping movement was not a sporadic uprising, provoked by individual ambition or religious fanaticism. It was the culmination of a seething discontent which had permeated the entire Chinese society for a long time. While in the heart of the country there was established a revolutionary power which held its own against overwhelming odds for such a long time, uprisings, insurrections,

rebellions and revolts were the order of the day throughout the country. They indicated a decay of the existing order of society and imbecility of the State based upon that order. In other words, the country was ripe for a great revolution.

There was a powerful rebellion in Szechwan under the Taiping chief Shih Ta-kek. The Muslims of Yunan were also in revolt. The vast province of Kansu was the scene of a widespread rebellion which could not be crushed for years. Turkestan raised the standard of revolt under Yakub Beg, who for some time established an independent Muslim State with Kashgar as its capital. The Chungaris in the mountainous regions of Tien Shan not only drove the Chinese forces out of their country, but themselves came down upon Kansu and even Shensi, whence they could not be dislodged until 1878. The authority of the Manchu monarchy was not secure even in the regions around Peking. The relatively well-to-do peasantry of Honan and Shantung did not fully join the Taipings when the latter attempted to capture the capital. The Hwang Ho basin, nevertheless, was in a state of ferment, and the poor peasants openly sympathised with the rebels. There was a peasant uprising in Shantung which could not be suppressed by Government troops. Finally, there was the mighty peasant revolt spreading throughout the south-eastern provinces, which was powerful enough to capture Shanghai and hold it for three years.

The feudal-patriarchal Empire of the Manchus was evidently on the point of dissolution. Not only did the Taiping rebellion resemble the peasant war in Germany, thus representing the earlier stages of bourgeois democratic revolution. As a matter of fact, the situation in which it took place can even be compared to some extent with that preceding the great French Revolution. In the seventies and eighties of the eighteenth century, France also was the scene of famines, mass hunger, riots, revolts, "robbery" and peasant uprisings. Those events were regarded as the symptons of a fatal disease wnich had overtaken the monarchy and the social system it represented. If in one country they were the harbinger of a revolution, there is absolutely no reason to place a different interpretation on similar events in another country.

The stage for the memorable drama enacted in Paris and a few other important cities was set by a whole series of events taking place throughout the country. In the decade preceding the revolution, France was infested by continuous uprisings of the expropriated, famished and destitute peasantry. Those peasant insurgents

were also branded as "robbers". Moreover, the popular uprising— of Poitiers in 1782, of Vizille in 1786, of Gavennes in 1783, of Vivaris in 1785, of Geveauden in 1789, and the innumerable series of similar revolts—also had a religious complexion.[15] Some of them began as a protest against the salt tax or exaction of the tithe. In other words, the events leading up to the revolution were all more or less primitive, elemental, revolts of the peasant masses.

Historically, the Taiping Rebellion in China was as much a bourgeois democratic movement as the Great French Revolution Had it not been crushed by a formidable international combination, it might have outgrown its elemental aspects and ideological immaturity. The ground was ready for a bourgeois democratic revolution; the decay and decomposition of the old order were complete; the feudal State was corrupt and impotent; and the forces of disruption were in operation throughout the country. .

While still in its earlier stages, the bourgeois democratic revolution suffered a severe defeat in China. That event left an indelible mark on the entire history of the country since then. The weakness of the Chinese bourgeoisie rendered that setback possible. In consequence of that violent setback to the democratic revolution, the Chinese bourgeoisie came under the corrupting and enervating influence of foreign imperialism, and thereby forfeited their revolutionary mission. Owing to a combination of factors resulting from the uneven development of capitalism throughout the world, the bourgeois democratic revolution in China could not be accomplished in the period when the bourgeoisie was a revolutionary class. Whatever might have been the role subsequently played by the Chinese bourgeoisie, the democratic revolution could not be resisted for all the time, and the historic struggle, begun by the Taipings, has been going on since their time.

Notes

1. The leader of the Taipiug movement.
2. Medhurst, "Taiping Rebellion".
3. T.T. Meadows, "The Chinese and Their Rebellion".
4. Lin Lee, "The History of the Taiping Revolution".
5. A British colonial official stationed at Hongkong gave the following description of Canton in 1848: "It is the scene of an active domestic and foreign trade—where production from every part of the country may be exchanged for those of any other region. Manufacturers at Canton are

numerous. There is no machinery, but the quantity of goods sent to market is very considerable. There are at least 17,000 people engaged in weaving silk. The number engaged in weaving cloth is 50,000; they occupy 2,500 shops, averaging twenty in each shop. The shoe-makers are a numerous class. Those working at stone, brass, iron, etc., are also numerous. The printing and book-trade are also considerable."—Montgomery Martin, "Commercial, Political and Social Conditions in China".

6. Meadows, "The Chinese and Their Rebellions".

7. *Ibid.*

8. J.M. Mackie, "The Life of the Taiping Wang".

9. Callery and Yvan, "History of the Insurrection in China".

10. Meadows, "The Chinese and Their Rebellians".

11. H F. MacNair, "Modern Chinese History".

12. R.S. Rantoul, "Frederic Townsend Ward".

13. "We issue this decree permitting you, the English, constant ingress and egress in full accordance with your own inclination and wish, whether to aid us in the extermination of the demons (Manchus) or to pursue as usual your commercial avocation." (Address of the Taiping Government to the English Mission of 1853). To this, the English Envoy replied : "I am now compelled to remind you that my nation, by treaty entered into with the Chinese Government, has obtained the right of trading in five ports, and that, it you or any other people, presume to injure in any manner the persons or property of British subjects, immediate steps will be taken to resent the injury in the same manner as similar injuries were resented ten years ago."

14. "It (the "ever victorious army") kept the rebels in check in the province of Kiangsu throughout the year 1862, and in February 1863 the British Government sanctioned the lending of Chinese Gordon to take command of that force which was speedily to turn the tide of war in favour of the imperialists (Manchus) and effectively to pave the way for Tseng Kwo-fan's final restoration of law and order. A considerable number of Europeans, including a French Admiral, had given their lives to win back China for the Manchu dynasty, although at the outset public opinion was in favour of neutrality, and there were many even then who thought China would be well rid of her degenerate rulers."—Bland and Backhouse, "China under the Empress Dowager".

15. Jaures, "La Histoire Socialiste".

CHAPTER VI

THE REFORM MOVEMENT

In the middle of the nineteenth century, the British Ambassador in France wrote: "In short, all symptoms which I have ever met with in history, previous to great changes and revolutions in government, now exist and daily increase in France."[1] Any intelligent observer could have written the same about China a hundred years later. The great rebellion, which all but overthrew the decayed Manchu monarchy, was indeed repulsed, thanks to the anxiety of the Christian Powers to save a tottering heathen dynasty from its inevitable doom. But the revolt had been brought about by forces too deep-rooted and inexorable to be stamped out. Like the proverbial thousand-headed hydra, they only thrived on their own blood. Numerous foreign opium smugglers infested the Chinese coast in the middle of the nineteenth century. Among them, not one but many Wards could be found to take a good shot at the heathen Chinaman for an ample recompense.[1] It was a profitable business to supply those soldiers of fortune with up-to-date weapons for spilling the blood of the Chinese peasants. Gordons also grew in every bush, when the "civilising mission" of the Christian Powers was to be carried to the four corners of the earth. All those and many other factors helped Tseng Kuo-fan and Li Hung-chang to repulse the rising tide of revolution. But they could not do the impossible; they could not inject new blood in the senile veins of the decayed old order.

Two basic factors go into the making of a revolution: The decomposition of the old order and the revolt against the old with the object and ability of creating something new in its place. The operation of the second factor may by opposed for some time with varying degrees of success. But it cannot be arrested indefinitely, so long as

the other factor remains in operation. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, any mending of the time-worm, fossilised, social system represented by the Manchu monarchy, was much more difficult than to do the same with the French monarchy a hundred years ago. The inevitable passing of the Manchus was long overdue. It was delayed still for some time by the intervention of extraneous agencies. It did not happen so quickly and dramatically as in France. But it did happen, as surely as a decayed tree is bound to fall or a mortally sick human body is doomed to die.

The decay of the old order was so obvious that the danger was perceived even by some members of the ruling class, whose eyes were not altogether befogged by senile vanity. The danger was recognised by men like Tseng Kuo-fan and Li Hung-chang who, with the willing aid of foreign imperialism, had headed off the first formidable attack upon the established order. The doom could be delayed, the fatal day could be staved off, only by infusing new blood into the withering veins of the old order. Such a social surgery was performed successfully in the France of Louis XIV, who managed to stabilise the undermined feudal monarchy by enlisting the support of the upper strata of the rising bourgeoisie. In China, the experiment failed. It was already too late. The Reform Movement represented that experiment. It preceded the Boxer Uprising, and for a time appeared in the forefront of the situation, immediately after the catastrophic defeat in the war with Japan.

Although men like Tseng Kuo-fan and Li Hung-chang perceived the gravity of the situation, they failed to advocate a thorough overhauling of the whole system. Their reforming zeal did not go beyond the army. Anxious about the safety of the established order, they wanted to provide it with modern arms, instead of the rusty paraphernalia so woefully discredited in every single trial of strength. Creation of a modern army was all they could suggest as a remedy; and that quackery only aggravated the situation instead of relieving it. Their project meant greater expenditure, and consequently heavier burden of taxation on the people. The reiinposition of *likin* to defray the cost of Tseng Kuo-fan's crusade against the Taipings only fanned the flame he sought to suppress. The "model army" organised by Li Hung-chang's disciple and protege, Yuan Shih-kai, drew heavily upon the depleted national exchequer. Big foreign loans were contracted for the payment of indemnity to Japan to meet the

expenditure of the ambitious scheme of army reform. Their operation totally disorganised the system of native finance. In short, ill-conceived, half-hearted, reactionary measures, taken in defence of an untenable system, only contributed to the chaos and hastened the inevitable fall.

A programme of reform, touching the basic problems of the day, though rather superficially, was formulated by Chang-Chih-tung, the Viceroy of Woochan. An aristocrat by birth, a State official by profession and essentially conservative in social outlook, he was a pioneer of industrial capitalism in China. As the Viceroy at Nanking, he had accomplished a considerable part of the scheme of army reform, then so very fashionable in the higher official circles. He built modern arsenals and roads. He was the founder of naval and military academies. He was an enthusiastic supporter of the plan to construct the Peking-Hankow Railway. Therefore, he was appointed the chief administrator of the Middle-Yangtse provinces. There, he acquired extensive mining interests, established the iron works of Hanyang, and built cotton mills. In short, Chang Chih-tung was eminently fitted for the role he assumed. It was to reform the old order so as to avoid its downfall.

The credit of initiating the Reform Movement belongs to Chang Chih-tung. His famous essay—"China's Only Hope", published in 1898, stated the basic principles of the movement. Written in the classical Confucian style, and inspired by the teachings of the Old Sage of feudal-patriarchal China, the essay expounded the doctrine of the middle course. The object of the author admittedly was to indicate the way for China to save herself from the impending revolution. In his opinion, what was necessary "to save China from revolution" was (1) to maintain and strengthen the monarchy; (2) to conserve the holy religion; and (3) to protect the Chinese race. The essay was an exposition of the ways and means for the realisation of these three objects.

In it the reactionaries were criticised for tbeir short-sightedness, while the liberals were ridiculed as a "confused flock of sheep". The former were chided for their opposition to foreign intercourse and for their reluctance to adopt modern military methods; the latter were upbraided for "zeal without knowledge" and for the lack of sufficient respect for the ancient teachings of Confucius. The advice to the progressive youth was "go to learn abroad, but do not forget

the traditions of your native land". Alarmed by the imminent decomposition of the old order, the aristocratic reformer exclaimed: "Do not let too much wisdom and ingenuity make you forget the holy sages." He suggested that China should learn the modern method of government, should acquire useful knowledge, "but not hanker for western things". He reaffirmed the old dictum: "It is necessary first that every man should fulfil his duty to his parents and elders". He declared that the Confucian theories of State were unchangeable, for they based upon the "Heavenly Way". On the strength of those theories, he advocated constitutional monarchy. A capitalist owning considerable industrial concerns, Chang Chih-tung, of course, was a believer in competition as the only impetus to power and progress. But he had no patience for the political consequence of the theory of competition. He dismissed republicanism as incompatible with the Confucian doctrine of "the obligation of subjects to the sovereign."

Evidently, Cbang Chih-tung desired to play the modern Confucius twenty-five hundred years after the Old Sage was dead. He sought to find a synthesis between the old and the new, with both of which he was so directly connected. But even that timid approach to the burning issues of the day was not approved by the Court, which was displeased with the behaviour of one from whom greater wisdom was expected. Chang Chih-tung's essay remained the point of departure of the Reform Movement, even after its author betrayed the cause in the first critical moment. Immediately, the programme did not satisfy anybody. For the liberals, it was too conservative. They represented the bourgeoisie as a class, independent of the feudal aristocracy. Although they were still far from demanding the overthrow of the monarchy, or the subversion of the aristocracy, yet they were no longer satisfied with an existence on sufferance. Indeed, they were also anxious to support the monarchy, provided that it broadened its base, so as to promote them to the ruling class. Chang Chih-tung's reform would satisfy only a small upper stratum of the bourgeoisie, not the entire class. On the other hand, partial, weak and conservative though they were, the proposed reforms meant some limitation of the power of the monarchy, of the privileges of the Court and of the position of the feudal aristocracy. The ruling class, therefore, was displeased with the protagonist of the reforms, who appeared to them to be a knight-errant.

The Reform Movement, however, penetrated the Court itself, which was split into two factions—the progressives and the conservatives. The former represented the impact of the southern bourgeoisie upon the forbidden city of feudal reaction. The conservative faction was headed by the Empress Dowager and her entourage, whose corrupt and insane policy had meant disintegration, defeat and disaster for the country. The war with Japan rendered the position of the conservatives entirely untenable. They proved themselves to be thoroughly bankrupt. The advantge of the situation, the progressives began the offensive. The scale turned definitely in favour of the progressives upon the defection of the doyen of the imperial family. Prince Ling, from the reactionary clique of the Empress Dowager. The time came for the bourgeoisie to show how they could do better than the corrupt feudal nobility. On the recommendation of the imperial tutor, Wang Tung-ho, who was the leader of progressives in the Court, the Emperor received Kang Yu-wei, the leader of the Reform Movement, in audience. That was a definite triumph for the progressives. It marked the beginning of the open struggle of the bourgeoisie for political power—not yet to capture it, but to participate in it with the object of reforming the entire State organisation, so as to circumscribe the power of the corrupt feudal aristocracy, and thus to relax the stranglehold upon the economic life of the country.

Before he was received by the Emperor, Kang You-wei, together with his disciple, Liang Chi-Chao, had founded the "Haio Hui" (Association for the Study of National Power). It was a club supported by the progressive Yangtse Viceroys—Liu Kung-yi and Chang Chih-tung. It published from Shanghai the "Shi Wa-pao" (The News of the Times) which contained translations of the classical works by European writers and biographies of great men of the West, such as George Washington, Peter the Great, Napoleon, etc. Kang Yu-wei was a great Confucian scholar. The conservative class of professional literary men ironically called him the "Modern Sage". Posthumously he has been glorified as the Chinese encyclopedist. Undoubtedly, he was the ideologist of modern China, with all the specific characteristics of the philosophers of the bourgeois revolution in Europe. A close and critical examination of the views of Kang Yu-wei is essential for a correct understanding of the political and social movements in modern China. It was he who laid

down their ideological foundation. Chang Chih-tung and Wang Tung-ho preceded him. Many others followed him. With all the superficial political differences, Sun Yat-sen was a spiritual disciple of Kang Yu-wei.

The philosophical doctrines of Kang Yu-wei will be examined in another chapter. Here will be given an account of his political activities which marked a very important, though tragic stage in the process of events leading up to the downfall of the Manchus. In 1897, he published his "Appeal to the Emperor on behalf of the Nation". It was in response to that appeal that the Emperor called him in audience. The document was a confession of political faith which was graphically summarised in its title. The reception of Kang Yu-wei by the Emperor and his subsequent appointment to a high office indicated the willingness of the feudal ruling class to enlist the services of the bourgeoisie for saving it from the catastrophic collapse staring it in the face. That willingness, however, was not shared by the entire class. The reactionary Court clique allowed the young Emperor to take that unprecedented step only as a stop-gap measure. The Young Emperor, Kuang Hsue, was not the master of his realm as Louis XIV was. The real ruler was the Old Dragon of the Empress Dowager, surrounded by the most diehard reactionaries. The disastrous defeat in the war with Japan has so completely discredited the reactionary Court clique that it could no longer count on any support in the whole of the country. In that precarious situation, it allowed the young Emperor to indulge in his reforming whims, only to pounce upon him at the first suitable opportunity. Had the entire ruling class stood behind the Emperor when he tried to enlist the services of the bourgeoisie, so eagerly offered only for a very beggarly recompense, the history of China might have been differently written. But history as well as its own misdeeds had doomed the monarchy to destruction. It had forfeited all right to exist even in a modified form.

Kang Yu-wei represented the bourgeoisie as an entire class. But even he did not have any more dangerous design against the monarchy than did Chang Chih-tung. Though from different angles of vision, both reached the same conclusion that constitutional monarchy was the salvation of China. In his famous "Appeal", Kang Yu-wei characterised the Emperor as the pivot of the State, and suggested reforms on the lines of those introduced by Peter the

Great and in Japan. The monarchy had certainly very little reason to be afraid of such reforms, if their successful application was still permitted by the conditions of the country. The misfortune of the Chinese ruling class was not that they opposed reforms recommended for reinforcing their position, but the impossibility of their application. The old order was decayed beyond repair. On the other hand, the Reform Movement also was doomed to failure by its pathetic inability to grasp the gravity of the situation. Too weak and constitutionally incapable of carrying through a great social revolution, the bourgeoisie took upon their shoulders the thankless and impossible task of propping up the feudal patriarchal monarchy, discredited by countless misdeeds of its own doing and tottering to fall under the terrific pressure of the glaring contradictions of its long outlived existence. All these factors taken together made the Reform Movement a tragi-comedy.

Taking place under the majestic shadow of a great revolutionary upheaval cast ahead, the Reform Movement of the timid bourgeoisie was halting; frightened by the implications of its own first step, it took several backwards.

The fire of the Taiping Rebellion had nearly consumed the old order, and scared the nascent bourgeoisie out of wits by its communistic appearance. The fire was still smouldering on the social horizon. On the top of that, there was rising a new giant, with what devouring appetite none could yet surmise. The bourgeoisie was mortally afraid of huge powder magazine of a mass revolt which alone could destroy the putrid structure of feudal-patriarchal reaction. All round there lay formidable weapons with which the bourgeoisie could conquer the paradise of their dream. But they did not have the courage even to touch them. They were too weak to wield such powerful weapons. So when the effete feudal-patriarchal monarchy was exposed in all its impotence by one mass upheaval, and menaced by a new one, the bourgeoisie sought to dress it up in the new clothes of a constitutional fraud. Through the "Appeal" of their ideologist, Kang Yu-wei, they begged the Emperor, "to convoke a council of the best men of the Empire", and suggested reforms on the ground that their introduction would "again make China strong and enable the Empire to continue in existence". They offered their services to the monarchy even before any reform was introduced. They argued that the "employment of the best men of the land even without reform"

would save the situation. Who were those best men, so very able to perform the hat-trick? Those considered as such by the feudal ruling class were all already in the saddle. Obviously, some representatives of the trading, manufacturing and financial interests, not connected with the feudal officialdom, were the would be saviours. They would do the miracle even without reform! The Reform Movement exposed itself to be such a willing agency for stabilising the tottering reaction, because the atmosphere was heavily charged with a spirit of mass revolt.

But in a certain period of history, the bourgeoisie are connected with the revolution in spite of themselves. They are either pushed, or drift into actions which represent an attack upon the established order, notwithstanding their anxiety to stabilise it. Rang Yu-wei's Appeal was full of suggestions, all calculated to strengthen the established order. But one little recommendation rendered the rest of the pious document completely antagonistic to its expressed purpose. It was for the grant of provincial autonomy. That measure would be the last blow to the undermined structure of the feudal-patriarchal State. The corner-stone of that structure was the personal responsibility of all provincial officials to the Emperor. It was that personal allegiance to the head of the State which held practically independent provincial governments subordinated to a central authority. The slightest reversal of that relation would turn over the precarious structure. Any responsibility downwards would provide provincial rulers with the pretext to interpret liberally their allegiance to the Emperor. The consequences were not difficult to imagine. It was on this issue of centralism versus provincial autonomy that the revolution finally swept away the Manchu monarchy almost with a snap.

That dangerous demand crept into the otherwise harmless programme of the Reform Movement because of the fact that the interests of the bourgeoisie were antagonistic to those of the feudal aristocracy. There was bound to be a rift in the lute. Revolution was in the air. And the bourgeoisie could not help putting a spoke in their own wheel, on which they wanted to join the merry-go-round of political power. The demand for provincial autonomy distinguished Kang Yu-wei's programme from that of his predecessor and patron, Chang Chih-tung. That apparently innocuous demand demarcated the two programmes as respectively of the two antagonistic classes which were bound to clash sooner or later,

willingly or not. In France, the *parlements* were the hated thorn in the side of the monarchy. In China, it was also the provincial assemblies which subsequently became the instruments of revolutionary agitation. By suggesting the reorganisation of provincial administration, the Reform Movement objectively demanded the creation of provincial assemblies as rivals to the Emperor for the control of local affairs. Under certain circumstances, even reforms are inseparably connected with the revolution. At the close of the nineteenth century, such circumstances obtained in China.

When Kang Yu-wei became the guide, friend and philosopher of the young Emperor, he proposed to carry out a programme of reform which included: (1) reorganisation of the State finance; (2) efficient collection of revenue; (3) imposition of indirect taxes; (4) increase of the salaries of officials; (5) granting of concessions for the exploitation of mines and construction of railways; (6) promotion and protection of commerce; (7) revision of the law courts; (8) modern education; (9) reorganisation of the army and navy and (10) amicable relations with foreign Powers. Under the given conditions, the introduction of the proposed reforms would go a long way to stabilise the situation. But the same conditions rendered their effective introduction impossible without revolution. Not seeing that implication of his programme, Kang Yu-wei expected to realise the coveted heaven on earth by the simple means of imperial edicts. They were issued in plenty during the "Hundred Days of Reform" from June 11 to September 22, 1898. Old institutions were swept away, and traditional customs abolished, if such drastic objects could ever be attained by strokes of pen. The regime of reforms was inaugurated with the following declaration: "It is the same evil that existed in the Sung and Ming dynasties. Our present system is not of the slightest use. We cannot in these modern days adhere to the ways of the Five Kings; even they did not continue exactly after the manner of their respective predecessors. It is like wearing thick clothes in summer and thin clothes in winter."[3]

That was a promising beginning. The proclamation spelt death to the established order. The Chinese society was threatened with a break-away from its old moorings, tied to which it had weathered the storm and stress of centuries, The story of the glorious Sung period was to be forgotten. The proud memory of the Mings was to be obliterated. The Five Kings were to be pulled down from

their mythical place of adoration; thus, the bottom of the State religion of China was to be knocked off. It was a perspective of ruthless iconoclasm, opened up by a decree signed by the High Priest himself. China was to be made all over again. Well might the ruling class gnash its teeth in wrath against the young imbecile taken by the ear by a heretic from Canton. Well might the "Old Buddha" lay aside her frivolities in the gardens of the Winter Palace and hold counsel with the elder clansmen about the necessity of taking back in her iron hands (now feeble) the reigns of the State. Consternation led to conspiracy. The Dragon hissed: "Lock up the young fool! He is gone mad. And burn that southern heretic alive! The Celestial Empire must be saved, at any cost. How can it exist, if the Five Kings were no more, and Confucius pulled down from his pedestal?"

But wait. Let the first effervescence subside. A king, after all, is a king. And his adviser? Oh, he is but an ideologist of the bourgeoisie, too weak and timid to lead a revolution even when it is raging on all sides, threatening to consume the putrid carcass of feudal reaction into white ashes. Only a few days passed, and it was already possible to see how the ground lay. In a new decree, the Emperor spoke more to the point. "Lethargy and corruption are ruining the Empire. Reform of the Government is needed to save the country. Therefore, it is decreed that higher and more universal education should be spread among the people for their betterment and for the strengthening and enrichment of the Empire. For this purpose, we must bring Western learning and sciences to our aid. Westerners are our superiors in this respect. Conservative statesmen, who deprecate Western science of government, are ignorant. The object of the Western science of government and system of education is to improve the condition of the masses. The Westerners are wise, for they have acquired wealth, comfort, longevity and command as the result of their system of government. We have studied the benefits of Western learning, and are determined to introduce them in our country." The decree concluded with a reaffirmation of the heavenly descent and divine right of the Emperor, and the duty of the imperial power was declared to be to make its subjects happy.

The Court recovered its breath. When the Emperor still believed in his heavenly descent and divine right, there was hope. To make the subjects happy? That the ideal king of Confucius also undertook

to do. The question, what is happiness? could be settled easily as long as the teachings of the Old Sage were not scrapped. While standing on his traditional ground, the crazy king, however, proposed many things which were not admissible if all that went with absolute monarchy should also be kept intact. The Emperor appeared to have entered into an alliance with people outside the aristocratic pale. In return for the recognition of his heavenly descent and divine right, he proposed to recast the teachings of Confucius to suit the interests of the bourgeoisie. He was inclined to be a bourgeois King. The threatening metamorphosis of kingship, irrespective of the doctrine of heavenly descent and divine right, was heralded by yet another decree which proclaimed that "commercial matters are of the highest importance"; expressed great concern for the promotion of trade; and appointed a Ministry of Commerce. It further enjoined the officials "to consult the merchants for the most speedy and satisfactory arrangement of commercial matters." The Son of Heaven, the proud occupant of the Dragon Throne, admitting the importance of trade which had been such an annoying agency of disturbance! Mixed feelings prevailed in the Court. Things were obviously in the melting-pot.

Reaction had reason to be nervous. By themselves, the decrees of the reforming Emperor were nothing more than an expression of pious desire, and as such could be ignored as long as the practical introduction of the proposed measures did not happen. Nevertheless, they were ominous indicators of the situation. Should the proposed reforms be put into practice, the feudal-patriarchal ruliug class would be dislodged from the key-position in the political and economic life of the country, and, in that situation, the very institution of monarchy might be in danger. On the face of it, the Reform Movement did not appear to be very dangerous. But such a devastating development was quite possible under the prevailing circumstances, if only the bourgeoisie would have the courage to place themselves at the head of the storm of mass revolt gathering all round. If the reactionary ruling class hesitated to take the offensive, the situation might not depend on the choice of the bourgeoisie. They might be forced to assert the "sacred right of revolt" even against their own will. Such things had happened in other countries; why not, then, in China? The reactionaries must take the bull by the horns. The Reformers were taken by surprise, before they had the time to look

around.

A summary of all the proposed reforms, announced through imperial edicts, issued in quick succession during the "Hundred Days", shows that the ruling class had ample reason to be alarmed. The following were included in the formidable list: (1) Abolition of the old examination system; (2) Foundation of a national university; (3) Establishment of an Official Bureau of Mining, Agriculture and Railways; (4) Abolition of sinecures; (5) The parasites thus deprived were to settle in the provinces; (6) Plan for the preparation of a State budget on modern lines; (7) Reward for technical inventions, industrial enterprises and agricultural improvements; (8) Freedom for the official press organs to criticise the Government. The situation came to a head when the formidable list culminated in the grant of the right to the lower State officials to memorialise the Throne in closed covers. All the measures were clearly directed against the feudal officialdom, the all-powerful mandarins. The ruling class was attacked from both sides. On the one hand, the bourgeoisie were promised the right to encroach upon its preserves; on the other, the monarch proposed to exercise his absolutism practically by coming in touch directly with the people. That would undermine the position of the mandarins, who ruled, robbed and ruined the country with the authority derived from a mandate directly received from the monarch. Thus deprived of their privileged position, they would easily be pushed to the wall in the struggle with the rising bourgeoisie, endowed with new political rights in addition to the economic power they already wielded. The Reform Movement directly tended towards an alliance of the monarchy with the bourgeoisie, at the expense of the feudal aristocracy and the officialdom.

In one of his edicts, the Emperor rebuked the mandarins for disturbing the relation between the monarch and his subjects, and the reforms proposed by him clearly tended towards limiting the power and privileges of the officials. Every item of the reforms cited above, if put into practice, would deal blow after blow to the very existence of the feudal-patriarchal ruling class, although all together they would strengthen the monarchy with the support of the bourgeoisie claiming to represent the entire people. The abolition of the old examination system would mean nothing less than the end of the monopolist control of the entire State apparatus by a class of conservative intellectuals, either hailing directly from,

or closely connected with, the feudal aristocracy. The proposed alteration of the standard of the Civil Service Examination, by including in its curriculum modern politics and economics, would not only throw open the doors of officialdom to the scions of the bourgeoisie, but put the old monopolists practically out of the run because of their ignorance. Then, the penetration of the State apparatus by bourgeois upstarts, with new-fangled notions of political organisation and financial administration, would eventually reconstruct it into an instrument of power in the hands of the bourgeoisie.

That would mean disarming of the feudal-patriarchal ruling class. In the midst of a battle, disarming is the prelude to destruction. The foundation of a national university for the teaching of modern knowledge would sound the deathknell of the ancient Confucian learning which provided the ideology of feudal-patriarchal domination. The abolition of sinecures and the proposed dispersal of their holders to distant parts of the country for earning a living would be a blow dealt directly to the Court which was the centre of reaction. A budget on modern methods, calculating and actually collecting all the items of revenue, would put an end to the regime of corruption and misappropriation by the provincial officials. Their position of power and privilege threatened from all sides, it was to be expected that the reactionaries would not take the blows lying down. Through the control of the State apparatus, they could prevent the introduction of the reforms heralded in the imperial edicts. But the forces for overthrowing the feudal-patriarchal Court as a condition for the successful application of the proposed measures of reform, were also there. They were raising their ominous heads from all sides. The bourgeoisie might not wish to invoke those forces of revolution, even for the realisation of their own programme. But they might be forced to do so against their will. Reaction was indeed in danger. The country was in the state of an acute revolutionary crisis.

Nevertheless, the monarchy itself was not in the least challenged. On the contrary, the bourgeoisie appeared on the scene as *plus royaliste que le Roi.* They proposed to save the monarchy which had been brought to the very brink of the abyss of destruction by insane and imbecile actions of the corrupt clique of the reactionary Court. They sought to ride into power under the patronage of the discredited monarchy which they proposed to rescue from the mins

of the whole system it had represented for centuries. The Chinese bourgeoisie, however, were not alone in taking up such a disgraceful and cowardly attitude in the midst of an acute revolutionary crisis, when the entire old order was breaking down under the weight of the contradictions of its own existence. Never and nowhere in history have the bourgeoisie by themselves gone to the extent of attacking the monarchy. They always sought to reform it—to shift its social basis from one class to another. Kang Yu-wei had a Turgot and a Necker for his predecessors. Those representatives of the French bourgeoisie also proposed to rescue the monarchy from the corrupting influence of the Court. When in June 1789 the French Court was plotting a *coup d'etat* against the refractory National Assembly, Necker pathetically took shelter under the sinister shadow of the monarchy, and implored the king to intervene personally in the situation which could no longer be saved either by the king or by god.

Kang Yu-wei and his associates proved themselves to be typical representatives of the bourgeoisie by devising means for saving the monarchy and having reformist decrees issued by a practically deposed king, also just when the Court was preparing a *coup d'etat.* Only they did not go even so far as their fore-runners had gone in France a hundred years ago. No't only did the Reform Movement fail to call upon the revolutionary masses to defend it against the imminent attack of reaction; it did not even demand the convocation of a parliament which could be the organ of a revolutionary struggle in that critical moment. The belated and timid effort of Kang Yu-wei to put the Empress Dowager under arrest, was forestalled by quick action on the part of that imperial dame; and the naive Emperor was pathetically deceived and betrayed when he made a childish attempt to lay his hand on a section of the army. The tragic inability of the Chinese bourgeoisie to carry through a revolution, needed for the promotion of their class interest, was once again evidenced subsequently by the fact that, when after all the monarchy did collapse, the Republic was entrusted to the tender mercy of the same arch-reactionary Yuan Shi-kai, who so shamelessly betrayed the reforming Emperor .

"The Hundred Days of Reform" concluded with the abdication of the Emperor Kuang Hsue, the flight of Kang Yu-wei and the execution of six leaders of the Reform Movement. The Boxer

Uprising followed immediately, revealing that crisis was much too deep-rooted to be overcome by a Court counter-revolution. The bourgeoisie failed to lead the revolution; but it marched on. It could not be crushed. It was much too powerful for the native reaction. But for foreign intervention, it would have swept away the debris of the decomposed feudal-patriarchal order, and then the bourgeoisie could reap the benefit of battles won by the masses. In the situation as it was, foreign imperialism fished in troubled waters. By crushing the uprising it averted immediate overthrow of the Manchus, but that very fact, at the same time, represented yet another blow to the totteriog order. The Boxer Indemnity, on the one hand, aggravated the bankruptcy of State finance and, on the other, served as the pretext for further foreign penetration. Foreign invasion forced the Manchu to introduce measures which coincided with the demands of the Reform Movement, denounced and defeated so very recently. For the service of foreign loans, contracted and to be contracted in order to pay the indemnity to Japan, modernisation of the State budget became inevitable. National finance must be put in order if international credit was to be secured. A strict control of revenues, collected throughout the country, was essential for the purpose. That meant a shattering blow to the State organisation, which enabled the Manchus to wield their power.

Under the Manchus, the State was constructed still according to the theories of Confucius and Mencius, on a synthesis of the antagonistic principles of centralism and local autonomy. It was indeed a classical feudal State. The provincial satraps were free to do whatever they pleased in their respective domains on paying formal homage and swearing allegiance to the Emperor. The Manchus remained the absolute rulers of China, because they ruled the least. Provincial governors were the real rulers. They were all Manchu nobles or Tartar Generals. According to the Confucian theory of State, the Emperor is rather the High Priest than the Political head of society. The basis of his supremacy is not the allegiance of his nobles, but the popular belief in his direct descent from Heaven. That divine right he delegated to the provincial rulers, who exercised it as practically independent sovereigns. The divine halo, radiating from the Son of the Heaven, conferred upon the provincial rulers an absolute power to pillage and plunder the country. They sent to Peking annual tributes only as the token of their moral and spiritual

allegiance. So, when the Central Government sent to the provinces financial commissioners to control taxation and supervise the collection and remittance of revenue to the national exchequer, the whole fabric of the traditional theocratic-patriarchal-feudal State crumbled. It had continued in a fossilised existence through centuries, ever since the holy days of Confucius. But the impact of capitalism was irresistible. The Confucian god must abdicate in favour of god capital, if not of native birth, then of foreign origin.

Even the befogged vision of the stupidest reaction could not be altogether blind to the rude realities of the situation. Threatened with destruction, the Manchus swallowed their pride, and tried to buy the loyalty of the native bourgeoisie at the cheapest price possible. When the army of the allied foreign imperialism was still occupying Peking, the Manchu Court, from its place of retreat at Hsian-fu, issued a decree heralding the so-called "Conservative Reform". Once again in absolute control of the affairs of the State, the astute Empress Dowager undertook the very same mission for which she had put the young Emperor in chains, driven Kang Yu-wei out of the country and beheaded his colleagues. The mission was to consolidate the tottering feudal-patriarchal monarchy by enlisting the support and services of the rising bourgeoisie.

In an edict, issued on January 28, 1901, the necessity for a change in the administrative system in accordance with new conditions was admitted, but it was asserted that such a change could take place within the limits of the Confucian principles of State. As the Reform Movement, sponsored by the deposed Emperor Kuang Hsue, had also begun from a similar point of departure, the distinction of the new edict was emphasised by denouncing Kang Yu-wei and his associates as "dangerous revolutionaries". They were even accused of having encouraged the Boxer Uprising. The sanction for a compromise with the hated upstart was found in the teachings of the Old Master. The edict declared: "The precepts handed down by our ancestors, and which correspond with the fundamental principles on which Western prosperity and power are based, are 'high stations filled with indulgent generosity' and 'liberal forbearance exercised in presiding over the multitude'." The high ofiicials of the State were exhorted to "discover by what means the prestige of the nation can be rehabilitated, national talent fostered, internal revenue extended and military forces placed on a proper footing."

It is remarkable how slightly the old Empress Dowager lagged behind the young Emperor in the zeal for reform. The reforms recommended in the above mentioned edict promised to meet the demands of the bourgeoisie on the questions of financial administration, monopoly of the State apparatus by the feudal-patriarchal *literati,* and modernisation of the army. Yet the original sponsors of these inadequate measures were driven out and denounced as dangerous revolutionaries. The reason of the apparent paradox was that, when the reforms were formulated by the bourgeoisie, they objectively represented an expression of the forces of revolution, and therefore were likely to outgrow the limits placed upon them by the timid bourgeoisie. The reforms recommended by Kang Yu-wei by themselves were not very dangerous. They could be adjusted to a continuation of the old order. But the conditions under which they were formulated made them pregnant which alarming possibilities. They did not go much farther than those which the diehard leader of rank reaction herself subsequently offered to concede. The ideology of Kang Yu-wei was hardly free from the tradition of Confucianism. There was little difference between his suggestion to rule the country by the "best men in the land" and the Empress Dowager's theory of filling "high stations with indulgent generosity". He proposed to prop up the tottering old order by infusing the blood of the young bourgeoisie in the senile veins of decayed feudalism. So desired also the Empress Dowager, when, in the January Edict, she advised the Manchu rulers to "foster natural talent". By that advice, she admitted that talent was no longer the monopoly of a particular class; it was to be found outside the pale of that class; and, wherever found, it should be harnessed for the service of the established order.

The Reform Movement, headed by Kang Yu-wei and patronised by the Emperor Kuang Hsue, could be so easily crushed because it was very weak in consequence of its failure to draw consciously upon the social forces objectively standing behind it. When the Empress Dowager stepped into the shoes of Kuang Hsue as the patron-saint of reform, the movement became a hot-house plant, totally isolated from the realities of the situation. Consequently, the reforms promised failed to produce the desired effect, in spite of the fact that they did not fall far short of the original demands as formulated by Kang Yu-wei. It was a period of revolutionary crisis. Things were moving fast. A feudal city, Peking was the centre of never-ending

Court intrigues and aristocratic decadence. Many a scene of the tragedy depicting the fall of the Manchus were enacted there. But the real life of the country pulsated elsewhere. In consequence of the penetration of foreign trade, the operation of imperialist finance and the rise of the native bourgeoisie, there had developed economic centres which overshadowed the capital in importance. In the enervating atmosphere of Court intrigues in Peking, the representatives of the southern bourgeoisie could not keep pace with the development taking place so rapidly in the economic centres of the country situated at great distances, made still greater by the absence of the modern means of communication. So, before long it was found that the fire, adroitly stolen from the guns of the Reform Movement, was inadequate to hit the mark. The old order was irreparably shaken.

Notes

1. Chesterfield's *Letters.*

2. General Ward was a man of great wealth", wrote the American Minister in Peking, Anson Burlingame, in a letter to the Secretary of State, communicating the news of Ward's death.

3. *Imperial Edict,* June 11, 1898.

CHAPTER VII

THE BOXER UPRISING

The defeat of the Taiping Revolt and the following reign of terror gave the decayed feudal-patriarchal absolutism another short lease of a precarious existence. But a social system so completely doomed to death could not be reinvigorated. The process of its decomposition and dissolution went on even more rapidly. The foreign Powers helped it defeat the revolution. Now they contributed very considerably to its imminent and inevitable downfall. And simultaneously with the decomposition and dissolution of the old order, there developed the forces of the new, in the face of all obstacles.

Owing to their immaturity as a class, the bourgeoisie did not play a prominent role in the first outbreak of the democratic revolution. The communistic deviations of the Taiping movement very much scared them. Towards the end of the revolt, the bourgeoisie pronouncedly sympathised with the forces of reaction.[1]

The attitude of the Chinese bourgeoisie represented a characteristic feature of their class all over the world. They might claim the "sacred right of revolt" as against political institutions and social relations obstructing free development of the capitalist mode of production, distribution and exchange. But they proved, time and again, in more than one country, that this claim, theoretically insisted upon, in practice was never pushed very far by their own efforts. The difference between feudalism and capitalism being not qualitative but only quantitative, the bourgeoisie by themselves would never destroy their predecessors root and branch, except under the pressure of forces beyond their control. Both the systems are based upon private property and the right of exploitation of one class by another. Even when striving to subvert an antiquated form of private property and

the corresponding relation of classes, the bourgeoisie are averse to the revolt developing into an attack upon the institution of private property as such, or to any serious disturbance of "law and order" meant to maintain society on the basis of class domination. From the point of view of the bourgeoisie, the task of the democratic revolution is only to restrict the powers and privileges of the feudal aristocracy to such an extent as would render it amenable to a reconciliation with the new mode of production.

Objectively, the Taiping Revolt represented an acute outburst of the strivings of the bourgeoisie to create a higher social order. But at that time the bourgeoisie in China were not developed enough to guide the course of the revolution. The revolution, at least in appearance, threatened to go farther than the bourgeoisie liked, because the forces involved in it were composed overwhelmingly of classes with nothing or very little to lose. It plunged the country into a state of civil war, inevitably injuring for the time being trade with which the Chinese bourgeoisie at that time were mainly concerned. Although the revolutionary government did its best to promote trade and industry, certain dislocation of normal business was unavoidable, because its very existence meant war.

The regime of "law and order", re-established by the decayed feudal-patriarchal State with foreign aid, could not, however, be conducive to the real interests of the bourgeoisie. A free development of the higher forms of production was not possible as long as Chinese national economy on the whole remained subjected to feudal-patriarchal relations and, in addition, was deeply penetrated by imperialist trade. Even trade could not prosper. The suppression of the Taiping Revolt meant a great expenditure. To recover that heavy loss, the State increased its exactions so much as to place still more restrictions upon free exchange of commodities not to mention production. Consequently, before long there was a revival of the revolutionary movement, this time with the bourgeoisie at the forefront, if not as a fighting force, at least as the ideological leader. The bourgeois democratic revolution entered the second stage in which the acute elemental outburst characterising the earlier stage was, indeed, absent, but ideological clarity, political outlook and social orientation attained a high level of development. These attributes were potentially present also in the Taiping Revolt. Had it not been defeated by a counterrevolutionary combination unprecedented in the history of other

countries, most probably those attributes would have asserted themselves, and the revolution might have developed from the elemental to the positive stage without a break. However, the appearance of the bourgeoisie as a force opposed to feudal-patriarchal reaction showed that, though the revolution had been checked, it was not destroyed. Revolutions, being in the nature of social progress, are inevitable. Due to historical conditions, one may begin later; a combination of circumstances may retard its free development; but it cannot be arrested indefinitely.

The bourgeois democratic revolution in China suffered from both the drawbacks. Historical conditions delayed it, and formidable forces were arrayed against it when it finally began. Consequently, its development became distorted. The Boxer Uprising was its second stage, chronologically, but at the same time it revealed the distorted nature of the process of revolutionary development. The most characteristic feature of that stage was the schism between the two forces of the revolution—between the progressive bourgeoisie and the revolutionary masses. The schism was not caused by any such class antagonism as may mark the very last stage of a bourgeois democratic revolution. Therefore, it was all the more deplorable. That stage was reached later, when the nationalist bourgeoisie supported feudalism as against the peasant masses, and thus became an instrument of imperialism, threatened by a democratic national revolution.

At the end of the nineteenth century, the Chinese bourgeoisie openly advocated limitation of the power of the feudal-patriarchal monarchy, and stood for the subversion of the social order it represented. Then they operated as a revolutionary force. As such, they should have placed themselves at the head of the peasant masses rebelling against the feudal-patriarchal regime. But the intervention of a third factor from outside seriously disturbed the relation of classes in China thereby distorting the process of the development of revolution.

When they first began the struggle against feudal-patriarchal reaction, the Chinese bourgeoisie unfortunately laboured under a wrong idea about the role of foreign imperialism. They were misled by the fact that ostensibly the foreigners were also struggling against the vagaries of the feudal-patriarchal monarchy. They committed the error of seeking an alliance with a factor which constituted the greatest hindrance to the realisation of everything they stood for. They

took the foreigners for friends, because they had modern democratic institutions at home, and believed that they were allies in a common struggle. That ideological confusion on the part of the Chinese bourgeoisie grew out of their economic position. During the preceding hundred years, they had developed as an integral part of a system with the help of which imperialism established its domination in China. It was the system of trading in commodities produced within the limits of feudal-patriarchal relations. The economic basis of the Chinese bourgeoisie at that time was mainly trade, and trade was under imperialist control. The Chinese bourgeoisie, therefore, began their abortive struggle against feudal reaction with great illusions about the role of the foreign Powers. Intolerable conditions, created by the operation of the galvanised forces of reaction, encouraged the bourgeoisie to appear as the ideological opponent of the established feudal-patriarchal system. But when the wide-spread social discontent broke out into a mass uprising, the bourgeoisie aligned themselves against it. The progressive Viceroys of the Yangtze provinces—Llu Kun-yi (Nanking) and Chang Chih-tung (Woochang)—were the fathers of modern capitalism in China. In the critical days of the Boxer Uprising, they entered into an alliance with arch-reactionaries like Li Hung-chang and Yuan Shi-kai, who had so shamelessly betrayed the reformist emperor. That unholy alliance, working in complete cooperation with the foreign Municipal Council of Shanghai, succeeded in checking the spread of the rebellion to the South, where it would have found a much more fertile ground. Thanks to that unholy alliance, a revolutionary mass upheaval to some extent came under the influence of the very reaction, to overthrow which was its objective task. Consequently, the second stage of the bourgeois democratic revolution in China also ended in defeat.

The suppression of the Taiping Revolt created the causes of the Boxer Uprising. The alignment of forces was the same on both the occasions. It was masses versus an alliance of foreign imperialism and native reaction. During the intervening period, between the two popular uprisings, the bourgeoisie had appeared on the scene. But their voice was lost in the fierce clash of the Boxer Uprising. The suppression of the Reform Movement, patronised by the young emperor, was one of the innumerable immediate causes of the outburst.

Already in the latter stage of the Taiping Revolt, it was clear

that the future of China had to be fought out between the people and foreign imperialism. The native reaction was but a secondary factor. It no longer represented the main hindrance to progress, the sinister role having passed on to the new factor of a foreign origin. The development of the bourgeois democratic revolution in China became such a distorted process because it had to take place not only in opposition to a decayed social system, but in the teeth of a formidable enemy, itself born out of the bourgeois democratic revolution in other countries. The contradictions of capitalism, accentuated by its uneven development, stood out in their crassest form. The suppression of the first stage of the revolution with the help of foreign intruders made it inevitable that, in its subsequent stages, the revolution must take on an anti-foreign character. The most outstanding feature of the Chinese revolution since then came to be anti-imperialism. From the very beginning, owing to the occupation of the throne by a foreign dynasty, the bourgeois democratic revolution was also a struggle for national liberation. The appearance of modern imperialism on the scene accentuated that nationalist character of the struggle. It became the most outstanding feature of the revolution. The Boxer Revolution made that very clear. The seeds sown by the suppression of the Taiping Revolt began to bear fruit.

The history of modern China has been misinterpreted to serve the purpose of imperialism. The misinterpretation is the most flagrant in the case of the Boxer Uprising. In connection with the Taiping Revolt, the inadmissible excuse of ignorance might be partially taken into consideration. The misinterpretation of the Boxer Uprising was wilful. A great popular upheaval was depicted as an artificial outbreak engineered by reactionary Manchu officials. That current interpretation is belied by the facts of the situation. The facts could be easily discovered by any unprejudiced observer. The Boxer Uprising was a revolutionary popular movement, because it was brought about by the conditions of feudal-patriarchal exploitation. It could not possibly be patronised or promoted by Manchu officials drawing their inspiration from the Court. As a matter of fact, from the very beginning, the Manchu Court as well as all the big officials throughout the country were afraid of the gathering storm, and sought foreign assistance as a guarantee against it.

It is a common knowledge that the leader of the reactionary Court clique, the all-powerful Prince Yung Lu, was decidedly hostile

to the movement. When Peking was surrounded by the rebels, and very disquietening news were pouring in from all parts of the country, he sent a circular telegram to all the provincial governors, directing them to take every possible measure for stamping out the movement. That telegram became a famous document of the history of the period. It was a clear statement of the opinion of the Court about the insurgents.[2] The Empress Dowager was depicted as the devil of the drama. In her case also, facts tell a different story. Alarmed by the situation in July 1900, she sent a telegram to the king of England appealing for help to suppress the rebellion.[3] That document made it clear that she had no sympathy for the Boxers. But the protestations of the Empress Dowager were dismissed as "the repentance of the Old Buddha", when the game was up.

At the very height of the crisis, the Court did extend halfhearted support to the anti-foreign aspect of the revolt. But even the belated protestations of the Empress Dowager showed that the Court circle was mortally afraid of the revolutionary social character of the movement from the very beginning. In extending the halfhearted support to the anti-foreign aspect of the movement, the Court acted reluctantly under the pressure of the masses, brought to bear upon it through the instrumentality of its members who were influenced by the reformist tendencies represented by the young Emperor. The reluctant act was subsequently characterised by the Empress Dowager as "the only mistake of her life." After the tragedy, by way of explaining "the only mistake of her life", the Empress Dowager made the following confession in course of a private conversation: "Prince Tuen and the Duke Lan reported that all Peking had become Boxer, and if we tried to turn them out, they would kill every body including the Court."[4]

It is evident from those facts that the ruling class did not make any mistake about the real nature of the movement. The conditions of the country could not be altogether unknown to them. Therefore, they could not possibly sympathise with a movement whose revolutionary social character was determined by those conditions. With great fear the ruling class had watched the storm gathering on all sides, but due to utter impotence could not do anything to check it effectively. When the seething fire broke out in a terrific flame, threatening to consume the decayed and discredited structure of reaction, they made a desperate effort to save themselves by reluctantly

sympathising with the anti-foreign nature of the revolt. The accidental, half-hearted and momentary relation of the ruling class with the revolutionary movement was but a by-product of the complicated situation. The Manchus did not act according to any plan to expel the foreigners. They sympathised with the anti-foreign sentiment of the movement out of sheer anxiety to save themselves. It was an adventure—a leap in the dark, while the house was on fire, hoping to land on something more secure.

Even at the very last movement, Prince Yung Lu endeavoured to dissuade the Empress Dowager against the adventurous policy of encouraging the anti-foreign sentiment of a revolutionary popular upheaval. His argument was: "These Boxers are all revolutionaries and agitators; they are trying to get the people help them to kill the foreigners, but he was very much afraid that the result would be against the Government."[5]

After the bloody suppression of the movement through foreign intervention, imperial edicts were issued denouncing the Boxers. Those documents were dismissed by foreign historians as futile efforts of the culprits to explain their previous acts. But they testified clearly to the fact that the Court had acted reluctantly under popular pressure. For example, in the edict issued on February 13, 1901, it was stated: "We have on more than one previous occasion hinted directly at the extraordinary difficulty of the position in which we were placed, and which left us no alternative but to act as we did," That explanatory statement was fully borne out by facts. The effete native reaction was not able to cope with the rising tide of revolution. It actually appealed to foreigners for help. But the latter waited, not out of any sympathy for the revolutionary movement, but for the opportune moment when their intervention would produce the most profitable result. Meanwhile, their acts of wanton aggression completely discredited the ruling dynasty and enraged the people.

The anti-foreign sentiment of the masses became a specific feature of the Boxer movement thanks to a combination of circumstances. Subjectively, the reactionary ruling class of China had little reason to be fond of the foreigners. But the alignment of forces during a great revolutionary struggle does not take place according to subjective feelings. It is determined by objective conditions; the affinity of class interest is the decisive factor. Having been bullied into disgraceful submission by foreign invaders, the Chinese ruling

class was naturally bitter against them; at the same time, they could not forget that, but for foreign intervention, the history of China from the days of the Taiping Revolt might have been very different. The reactionary ruling class of China, however, was not moved by any gratitude for the foreigners. It was simple identity of interest which actuated them. The reactionary Court grandee Kang Yi, in his wild fury against the Reform Movement, exclaimed: "Far better it will be for us to divide our possessions among our friends, the foreigners, than to permit our slaves to rob us our heritage."[6] Yet he has gone down in history as the leading anti-foreign crusader!

The reactionary ruling class would not be what it was, if its well-warranted bitterness against the foreign invaders coincided with the popular anti-imperialist sentiment, which came to be the specific feature of the revolutionary movement. There could not be any possible doubt regarding the historic role of the feudal-patriarchal ruling class in relation to an essentially democratic revolutionary movement. Not only would the rank reactionaries of the Court rather capitulate entirely to the foreigners than tolerate any revolutionary change in the established conditions of the country. Even the progressive elements among the provincial rulers, some of whom had extensive connection with capitalist enterprises, were decidedly pro-imperialist in the face of the rising tide of revolution. Viceroy Chang Chih-tung of Woochan was one of the early ideologists of the Reform Movement, and a pioneer of modern industrial capitalism in China. Yet he joined such staunch defenders of reaction as Li Hung-chang, Liu Kun-yi and Yuan Shih-kai in their crusade against the revolution. "The great Viceroys have been standing by us splendidly for the last four months. But how much longer could they hold their turbulent population quiet in the face of constant incitement?"[7] All those leading members of the feudal ruling class played important roles in those fateful days of China. They were all alarmed by the deep-rooted discontent of the people. Being in close touch with the realities of the situation, they knew fully well that the effete ruling dynasty would be altogether unable to cope with matters, if the wide-spread popular discontent broke out into a revolutionary uprising. Therefore, they were all eager to secure foreign help for strengthening the position of the established order which they wanted to reform gradually.

Lord Beresford was the head of the British mission sent to

China on the eve of the Boxer Uprising. He recorded the views of "the great progressive administrators" on the realities and the perspectives of the situation. They all expressed misgivings, and believed that the salvation of the existing order was to be found in foreign aid. From his conversation with Viceroy of Nanking, the British envoy came to know that, to meet the increasing service of foreign loans, the Central Government was heavily encroaching upon provincial finance; the financial stringency was leading to the breakdown of provincial administration; that armed forces sufficient to cope with the grave situation, created by popular discontent, could not be maintained for the lack of money; that additional taxation to replenish the provincial treasury was sure to cause greater disturbance; and that the whole country was dangerously unsettled.[8] After his interview with the Viceroy of Woochan, Beresford drew the folio wing picture of the situation: "The Viceroy was afraid of disturbance in his provinces (Hunan and Hupeh); he did not have sufficient forces to cope with a serious outbreak, nor did he have the finance to increase his forces; and the people knew that they were taxed more heavily than ever, for the foreigners have to be paid."[9] Around the southern port of Swatow, the British mission found the people violently opposing any new taxation. "The officials in this locality are afraid of the people, and they cannot enforce unjust demands as they have no troops whatever."[10]

The country was seething with discontent. The immediate cause of that state of affairs was increased taxation to pay interests on foreign loans, forced upon a feeble government. The masses realised how foreign penetration intensified their exploitation and aggravated their misery. They were determined to resist further taxation. But, on the other hand, the Government, central as well as provincial, was financially bankrupt. The administrative system was breaking down everywhere. The feudal-patriarchal State was impotent before the gathering storm, and was conscious of its impotence. The position of the ruling class was so desperate that its more intelligent and far-seeing members realised the necessity of reforms, to be introduced with the aid of the friendly foreign Powers.

The situation, obviously, was ripe for a revolution. The Boxer Uprising was the culminating point of a movement which grew all over the country out of the desperate conditions of exploitation, destitution and intolerable misery of the masses. Since the condi-

tions, by themselves not altogether new, had grown worse as a direct result of the forcible penetration of imperialist trade and finance, it was but natural that a revolt, essentially against the feudual-patriar-chal reaction, should be embittered with hatred for the foreign invaders.[11] The anti-foreign appearance of the democratic revolution in China was the inevitable consequence of the alliance between native reaction and foreign imperialism.

One should start reading the history of the Boxer Uprising with the question: Had the people of China reason to hate the foreigners? Christian missionaries have been depicted as the brave victims of the fanatic fury of a heathen people. China was their Calvary, where they perished on the Cross, as true preachers of the Gospel. But a sober examination of the facts of the situation deprives the fiction of much grandeur. A close study of the stories of the so-called anti-Christian riots in China reveals the fact that the Christian missionaries were objects of attack when they acted as the vanguard of imperialism; they were not molested for preaching their faith. Moreover, the provocation usually came from the preachers of the Gospel who, if true to the faith they professed, should present the other check when one was smitten. Foreign writers, not at all sympathetic to the Chinese, have recorded how the Christian missionaries flagrantly abused the privileges granted to them as religious workers. They claimed for the native converts immunity from the laws of the land. Very frequently, the corrupt imbeciles of local officials could be bribed or bullied to concede to that illegitimate claim. The result of the practice was the adoption of Christianity by the riff-raffs of society, who carried on their nefarious trade under the protection of the Church and the mighty Governments standing behind it. The anti-Christian sentiment on the part of the ignorant rural population was a very natural reaction to such a practice. The Catholics and the Protestants have tried to blame each other for acts that can hardly be justified or explained away. There was nothing to choose between the two. Making allowance for individual cases, "the missionaries have been attacked rather because they were foreigners than because they were propagators of the Christian religion."[12] That is the verdict of a protestant priest who made great efforts to clear the shady record of the Christian missions in China. Having failed to do so, he only made scape-goats out of the Catholics.

Foreign intervention had defeated the Taiping Revolt, but the

revolution could not be altogether crushed. Before long, it recovered from the heavy blow. Serious and wide-spread movements of insurrection against the galvanised reaction went on in the outlying parts of the country, as a direct continuation of the great revolt defeated in the centre. And from that very defeat, their resulted conditions which gave an impetus to the revolution.

In the territories occupied by the Taipings, the barrier tax *(Hkiri)* had been abolished. To defray the costs of the counterrevolutionary expedition, that feudal taxation on trade was revived. Introduced as an emergency measure, it, however, remained in force, and feudal officials throughout the country welcomed it as a fruitful source of income. The situation gradually became so bad that rice, coming from Hunan to Hankow, a distance of only two-hundred miles, was subjected to taxation as often as ten times. Consequently, the price soared high. A serious hindrance to trade, the barrier tax, in the first place, ruined the peasants and the artisans. Their produce ultimately had to be sold in the competitive market; therefore, the additional feudal charges were met by reducing the price paid to the producers. As far as the internal market was concerned, the renewed feudal exaction operated both ways at the expense of the masses: the purchasing price was lowered, while the selling price was raised. The collection of *likin* naturally provoked disturbance everywhere. The situation was further aggravated when presently the proceeds of the oppressive feudal levy became the share of foreign imperialism. The forced indebtedness of China swelled so much as could no longer be covered by the income from the maritime customs. The *likin* was also pledged for the services of foreign loans. That could not remain unknown to the victims of the hated tax. There was a direct economic reason for the hostility against the foreigners.

While bitterly resenting the new consequence of foreign penetration, the masses remembered that, a short while ago the Taiping movement had abolished many burdens on them, and that it had been suppressed with the help also of the foreigners. There still lived many peasants and artisans who had participated in the Taiping Revolt. They remembered how they paid less taxes and got better prices for their produce under the Taiping regime. There was ample historical, as well as direct, reason for them to hate the foreigners.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the total foreign loans

forced upon China amounted to about seventy million pounds. To that was added another forty millions, borrowed to pay the indemnity to Japan, according to the Treaty of Shimonoseki. Loans forced upon weak and helpless countries usually bear a high rate of interest. Normally, that itself might not be altogether unbearable. The worst of it was the mortgage of the most productive sources of State revenue, and the foreign control of its collection. The Government of the country was obliged to levy additional taxes for keeping its head above the water of complete financial bankruptcy. While an empty exchequer hastened the disintegration and collapse of the entire State machinery, new burdens of taxation, only a fraction of which ever reached the distressed exchequer, fanned the fire of popular dissatisfaction. The army had been almost completely destroyed in the war against France in the South, and particulars in the Sino-Japanese war. Owing to financial difficulties, it could not be reinforced. The Government was placed between the devil and the deep sea: the riding tide of revolution on the one side, and foreign invasion on the other. In that hopeless position, efforts were made from all sides to persuade the Chinese Government to deliver the control of its armed forces to foreign Powers. The Beresford Mission went to China ostensibly on behalf of the British Chamber of Commerce. In reality, it was highly political; its object was to counter the pro-Russian policy of Li Hung-chang. High Chinese oflBcials were approached with the proposal of reorganising the Chinese army under British supervision.

Internal disintegration on the one hand, and foreign penetration on the other were all but complete. Only a revolution clearing away the debris of the decomposed old order and determinedly checking the operation of the sinister forces of foreign aggression, could save the country in that situation. The Boxer Uprising heralded the necessary revolution. It is not to be identified with the tragic episode, enacted in and around the Metropolitan area under a certain amount of reactionary influence. It was a gigantic mass movement, developing throughout the land during the closing years of the century. Potentially, the movement was more mature than the Taiping insurrection. This time the bourgeoisie had appeared on the scene to provide it with a clearer ideology and a definitely progressive political programme. In spite of the cowardice displayed by the bourgeoisie in every critical moment, the Reform Movement led by them was

organically connected with the mass upheavel. Indeed, the suppression of the Reform Movement was an immediate cause of the Boxer Uprising.

The cleverer elements of the ruling class coquetted with the anti-foreign aspect of the revolution to isolate the progressive bourgeoisie which entertained such a tragic illusion about the democratic governments of Europe and America. While fleeing the country upon the collapse of the Reform Movement, its leader Kang Yu-wei met Lord Beresford at Hongkong to tell that he had advised the Emperor to secure the assistance of Great Britain in his effort for the reformation of China.[13] Poor specimen of a leader of Chinese Girondism! He failed to understand that, by suppressing the Boxer Uprising, as previously the Taiping Revolt, the Western Powers dealt much more severe blows to the democratic movement in China than the Empress Dowager did by her *coup d'etat* against the reforming Emperor. The reactionary ruling clique of Peking blundered into a clever piece of manoeuvre which saved them for the time being. They succeeded in splitting the democratic forces. Firstly, a smashing blow was dealt to the weaker section, namely, the bourgeoisie, and then the ground was prepared for foreign Imperialism to handle the more difficult part of the job.

Because of its failure to see how the forces were really aligned, the Reform Movement could be so easily checked. Its objectively revolutionary significance was cancelled by its failure to appreciate correctly the role of imperialism. It failed to see that the penetration of imperialist trade undermined, indeed destroyed, its own social basis. Had it appreciated the situation correctly, it should have welcomed the disturbances, riots and insurrections as so many battles fought by the masses for the triumph of its cause. But its leaders deplored those revolutionary events, for they were disintegrating the Empire.

The masses were rising against foreign penetration, because imperialist trade was ruining the economic life of the country. Commodities manufactured with machines in far off lands reached the remotest corners of China. Native artisans, still working with the most primitive means of production, were driven to the wall in the competition with the imported goods which could be sold more cheaply. Gradually, millions of them were deprived of their means of livelihood. They could clearly see who caused their ruin. They

hated the foreigners who took the bread away from their hungry mouths. The destruction of handicrafts had a much more far-reaching effect. It was harmful for the development of native capitalism, and therefore injurious to the Reform Movement itself. The workers, displaced by the penetration of imported goods, were not differently employed. They were thrown out of the process of production. Consequently, so much social labour was practically wasted, and national economy was proportionately weakened. From time immemorial, Chinese handicraft had developed as an adjunct to the basic industry of agriculture. Therefore, the ruined artisan could not leave the village, where he remained tied to a small piece of land utterly insufficient to provide him and his family with anything like a human living. In other countries the destruction of handicraft caused only a temporary social unsettlement. The expropriated artisans were before long absorbed in modern industries. But in China only the disruptive effects of the industrial revolution were felt. She was prevented from benefiting by its constructive consequences. That was partly due to the historical reasons set forth in previous chapters, and partly to the operation of forces produced and accentuated by the industrial revolution in other countries. Those forces were the contradictions of capitalist production which gave birth to modern imperialism.

The anti-foreign riots in China leading up to the out-break in the opening year of the century, corresponded in certain respects with the machine-breaking movement in the earlier stages of the industrial revolution in Europe. Before the ruined artisans of China, there was no machine to destroy. There were, however, the foreign traders and their accomplices, who personified the ruinous effects of machines situated in far off lands. The anti-foreign riots in China are no more condemnable than the machine-breakers' movement in England. Neither of them was reactionary, although immediately they appeared to be so. Both of them represented the elemental force of a great revolution of the future. In addition to their historical significance, the anti-foreign riots in China were actually so many events in the process of a revolutionary development.

One can write a whole volume to detail all the economic causes of the anti-foreign movement that swept China in the last decade of the nineteenth century, and since then became the predominating feature of her national life. Only a few can be mentioned

by way of bringing into relief the social and political nature of the Boxer Uprising. In addition to the artisans, millions employed in the transport system also suffered heavily in consequence of the penetration of foreign trade. Lacking the beasts of burden, human labour was the means of transport in China throughout the ages. Millions employed in the primitive system of transport began to be deprived of the means of subsistence by the introduction of steam-shipping on the rivers, and of railways. It was not an accident that the Yangtse Valley and the territories traversed by the Grand Canal were the scenes of constant disturbance. Those being the main arteries of trade in China, the very numerous class of boatmen was concentrated there.

The increased burden of taxation, lower prices for what they sold and higher prices for what they bought, destruction of the means of livelihood for millions, traditional conditions of scarcity, increasingly accentuated by the employment of land and labour to the production of non-food crops, and many other auxiliary causes were in operation to bring about a situation which constituted the background of the Boxer Uprising. As all those factors were directly or indirectly connected with foreign aggression, it was inevitable that the revolutionary ferment produced by them should have an anti-foreign character. Even writers with no sympathy for the Chinese could not be altogether blind to the realities of the situation. Analysing the causes of the outbreak, an English missionary wrote: "Many of the innumerable sufferers from the steady advance of civilisation into the interior of China have no appreciation of the causes of their calamity. Yet, there are many others who know perfectly well that before foreign trade came in to disturb the ancient order of things, there was in ordinary years enough to eat and to wear, whereas now there is a scarcity in every direction, with prospects of worse to come. With an experience like this, in many different lines of activity, the Chinese are not to be blamed for feeling a profound dissatisfaction with the new order of things.[11]

At the same time, foreign aggression was also disintegrating the country territorially. Since the doors of China were forced open by the Treaty of Tientsin in 1860, foreign penetration proceeded rapidly in different directions. The possibilities of trade in a country with a bankrupt feudal-patriarchal national economy were soon

exhausted. The exploitation of the Chinese people through the exchange of commodities reached the limit. Without a revolution in the national economy of the country, any substantial increase in the exports of China could hardly be expected. The inability to increase her exports continuously placed a limit on China's capacity to purchase foreign goods. Consequently, her relations with foreign countries changed again. It entered a new period. From commercial transactions, it became financial operations. Having secured complete freedom of trade, imperialist policy in China developed into concession-hunting and the establishment of spheres of influence.

In the sacred name of free trade, the imperialist Powers had violently encroached upon the sovereignty of the Chinese Government. Having forced China to open her doors to the foreign invaders, the latter now tried to slam them in the face of each other. China was on the verge of dismemberment. The situation alarmed even the foreign Powers who had greater stakes in the country. Great Britain was particularly concerned. She was anxious to prevent the policy of creating spheres of influence from going to the extent of breaking up the country into colonies belonging to the rival imperialist Powers. That would mean a great loss for the Power with the largest capital invested in China, and England at that period was the fiuancer of the world. Hence her anxiety to prevent the break-up of China. Should the country be broken up, and the Central Government disappear in the process, who would pay the interest on the forced loans? The existence of a nominal Central Government was necessary for the operation of foreign finance. There must be someone who could, with a semblance of authority, grant concessions to foreign banks. The disappearance of such an authority would render invalid the concessions already granted by it. Therefore, the holders of those concessions were vitally concerned with a formal maintenance of authority. On the other hand, the shadow of a central authority provided them with the legal instrument for fighting the forces of revolution. Discussing the evil consequences of the imminent break-up of China, a representative of British Imperialism wrote in 1899: "If spheres of influence are marked out in China, and the resultant downfall of the Chinese Government is brought about, who will pay the bond-holders, and what security have they for their loans? What will become of China's guarantee in the matter of railway loans? And even if these matters

are amicably settled between the Powers grabbing at Chinese territories, how can there be any security for interests being paid on loans by a country plunged into anarchy and rebellion which must seriously disturb trade, and diminish the customs receipts?"[14]

Here was the policy of modern imperialism formulated by a representative of the leading Power. The previous policy of wanton robbery had created conditions which provoked a revolutionary outbreak. Finance capital is the basis of modern imperialism. Its interest demanded that a central authority should formally exist in China, to be utilised as a bulwark against revolution. The feudal-patriarchal reaction should be galvanised with the aid of foreign finance, and in consideration of that service, the latter should become the real ruler.

The anxiety of Britain as well as of the United States of America, however, could not successfully cope with the situation. The scramble for concessions, begun on the conclusion of the Sino-Japanese war of 1894-95, went on merrily, defying the "liberalism" of Anglo-Saxon finance. The mediaeval imperialism of semi-feudal Russia and Japan ran amock in China. Behind Russia stood France, the traditional antagonist of Britain. Territories grabbed by Russia provided a profitable field of investment for French capital. Lastly, Germany entered the list, brandishing her mailed fist.

The series of aggressive acts committed by the imperialist Powers against a weak and defenceless China since the Treaty of Shimonoseki in 1895, were enough to justify even a more bitter hatred for foreigners than expressed through the outbreak of 1900. No country could be placed in that position of humiliation without resistance. The Boxer Uprising was an act of self-preservation, and the defence of a people, plundered, robbed, exploited, ill-treated, cajoled, cheated and insulted by foreigners to whom no harm had been done. It was a battle for freedom and democracy, if there had ever been any in the history of the world—a battle fought against overwhelming odds, and therefore lost tragically. But just like the Taiping Revolt, it was defeated—not crushed.

The easy victory of the upstart Japan in 1894 revealed that the ruling class of the Celestial Empire was thoroughly worn out, and the country could be divided among foreign Powers without provoking any effective resistance. By the Treaty of Shimonoseki China ceded to Japan the entire Liaotung Peninsula, Formosa and other smaller

islands; she recognised the independence of Korea, which thus became a Japanese colony for all practical purposes; she agreed to pay a huge indemnity. Alarmed by the great advance made by Japan, Russia intervened, claiming Manchuria for herself. The European Powers had forced Japan to disgorge the- Liaotung Peninsula in consideration for a large increase of the sum to be paid by China as indemnity. But they now backed up the Russian claim. The burden imposed upon China was utterly disproportionate to her ability to pay. It was two-hundred million taels—a sum which could not be possibly paid by a country with a total revenue of eighty-five million taels and a yearly deficit of about fifty millions in the balance of foreign trade. Consequently, the indemnity represented an additional forced loan given to China in return for the very same territory which Japan had been compelled to disgorge. The apparent improvement in the terms of the Treaty of Shimonoseki meant even a greater aggression on China. For guaranteeing the payment of the indemnity, which China evidently could not pay out of her own resources, Russia received the concession to build the Chinese Eastern Railway through the province of Manchuria. That concession carried \v ith it the surrender of Chinese sovereignty over an extensive territory through which the railway was to pass. Russia herself was not in a strong financial position. The loan promised by her to China was actually raised in France on the guarantee of the Russian Government. The Russo-Chinese Bank was established as a new instrument for the operation of international finance in China. The great statesman of the tottering Chinese reaction, Li Hung-chang, visited Russia, and was bribed by Count Witte to sign the secret Russo-Chinese alliance, by which Manchuria was practically ceded to Russia. For financing the Russian project to annex Northern China and find a free access to the Pacific, through Port Arthur, France received extensive mining, railway and trading privileges in the southern provinces of Yunan, Kwangsi and Kwangtung, adjacent to Annam which she had previously grabbed.

The next innings opened with Germany scoring heavily. For some time, German battle-ships had been scouring the coasts of China, looking for a "place in the sun". The Kaiser had openly announced his intention to secure a naval base on the Chinese coast as a counter-move against Russia. His navy selected Tsingtao and the adjoining Kiaochow Bay as the desirable booty. But there must be an excuse for occupying it. It is against imperialist ethics to take an

aggressive step without a provocation, which has therefore got to be engineered whenever necessary. Having attained the distinction of a first-class imperialist Power, Germany also had sent missionaries as the advance-guard for the conquest of China. Their task was to produce the necessary provocation at the right moment. So, "fortunately for Germany's scheme, two Roman Catholic missionaries were murdered in Shantung."[16] For the protection of Christianity, German marines instantly seized the places already selected as suitable for the projected naval base. Negotiations followed. Finally, by the Convention of Kiaochow, signed in 1898, China conceded to Germany valuable mining and railway concessions throughout the province of Shantung.

German action, in its turn, was a welcome provocation for Russia. Within a year after the conclusion of the secret Russo-Chinese alliance, Russia calmly took possession of Port Arthur, Talienwan and a considerable part of the Liaotung Peninsula, flagrantly violating the terms of the alliance. Russian battle-ships captured Port Arthur only a week after the German seizure of Tsingtao, thus proving that those moves and counter-moves of international imperialism on the chess-board of China were made by a concerted plan. Obviously, they had been holding themselves in readiness for an action previously decided upon. Li Hung-chang and other high Chinese officials were again given "valuable presents"[17] for accepting the Russian terms about the annexation of Port Arthur and the adjoining territories. In view of the events taking plSce in the North, France could not let things alone in her own sphere of influence in the South. Two weeks after the Russian occupation of Port Arthur, the French Minister in Peking "persuaded the Chinese Government to lease to France for ninety-nine years the Bay of Kwangchow and the surrounding territories"; of course, in the meantime, the desired spot had been captured by military force.

With great chagrin Britain watched the process of the disintegration of China. But, being powerless to check it, she also joined in the merry-go-round and "agreed to take the lease of Wei-hai-wei with the right to erect fortifications and station troops."[18] Although at the moment Britain's stocks were rather low in China, the paramountcy having for the time being passed on to Russia, she was playing a deeper game. While China was threatened by a revolution from inside, and dismemberment by foreign aggression, British dioplomacy was

seeking to acquire military as well as financial control of the Central Government, in order to save China from both the dangers, and incidentally to transform her into an exclusive possession of British Imperialism. Beresford's proposal for the reorganisation of the Chinese Army with the help of the British Government was favourably received in the higher circles of Chinese officialdom. Those who welcomed that sinister proposal were actuated partly by the fear of imminent collapse of the Empire, and partly by the jealousy for Li Hung-chang, the uncrowned king of the country, under Russian patronage. They also recognised the imperative necessity of some reform, if the country was to be saved from the threatening revolutionary upheaval. But, in spite of the support given to it by the "progressive" sections of the Chinese ruling class, the plan of British Imperialism miscarried. The reason, firstly, was the internal contradictions of imperialism itself; secondly, it was the failure of British Imperialism to back up effectively the progressive forces when they were suddenly attacked and crushed by reaction.

The loss of sovereignty in the best sea and river ports of the country, the threatening territorial dismemberment forced lease of important economic and strategic places, foreign financial control, exercised through the mortgage of the main items of State revenue, concessions wrested by force, the generally privileged position of the foreigners—all these factors, coupled with the deep-seated discontent against the feudal-patriarchal reaction, contributed to the Boxer Uprising. The perennial agrarian revolt was accentuated by increased taxation. On the top of that, bad weather spoiled the crops for two successive years. Starvation drove hundreds and thousands to banditry. Under such conditions an insurrection takes place on the slightest provocation, and enough of provocation was there. The outbreak occurred in Shantung and Chili, because a devastating flood of the Hwang Ho in 1898-99 rendered great multitudes destitute and homeless in those provinces. But the movement was by no means confined to that region. During the whole decade, riots, disturbances, insurrections, had been taking place all over the country.

The Taipings had come from the South. The Reform Movement was also based there. But the Boxer Uprising did not spread to the South. This fact has been seized upon by those who disputed the revolutionary nature of the uprising. But the Reform Movement and the Boxer Uprising cannot be regarded as two water-tight compart-

ments of the national life of China, except by those who are utterly unable to discover a dynamic process of social evolution in the background of the bewildering march of historical events. An identical complex of social conditions inspired the Reform Movement and also provoked the acute outburst of discontent in the form of the Boxer Uprising. They were the decay and dissolution of the old social order, and the inevitable growth of the forces of discontent and strivings for progress. The bourgeoisie constituted the social basis of the Reform Movement. But owing to their immaturity, they failed to appreciate the significance of the entire complex of all the forces in operation. Just as the Reform Movement and the Boxer Uprising were two different expressions of the self-same revolutionary urge, just so was the relation between the native reaction and foreign imperialism. Both these latter were antagonistic to the forces of progress. The imperative necessity of the moment was a combination of the struggle against native reaction with a determined resistance to foreign penetration. But the bourgeoisie did not take that view of the situation. They laboured under a tragic illusion about the role of imperialism. Therefore, they failed to join the masses when the latter began the anti-imperialist struggle.

The Reform Movement and the Boxer Uprising were counterparts of a single process—that of the development of the bourgeois democratic revolution. Nevertheless, the leaders of the former, held aloof from the revolutionary action represented by the latter. The organic relation between the two, however, is clear if history is analysed as a description of the process of social evolution. Weakly formulated and timidly expressed, the demands of the Reform Movement represented a rudimentary programme of the maturing bourgeois democratic revolution. The suppression of that movement was an attack upon the revolution. The Boxer Uprising was a bold answer to that challenge of reaction. The British Minister at Peking, Sir Claude Macdonald, wrote: "There has been, since the so-called *coup d'etat,* very considerable amount of unrest in the city, more specially since the execution of the six leaders of the Reform Party."

There were many reasons why the second insurrection did not affect the South. The severe blows for suppressing the Taiping Rebellion had fallen more heavily on the southern masses; they had not yet fully recovered when the popular forces in the North resumed the fight. The leadership of the Taiping Rebellion had been provided

by the small traders, artisans and petty intelligentsia. Those classes were cowered by the sudden attack upon the Reform Movement which represented also their aspirations. The depressing consequences of a severe defeat, suffered only a short time ago, and the failure of the petit-bourgeoisie to provide.the leadership, prevented the southern masses from joining the second uprising in large numbers and with sufficient rapidity. Moreover, the upper strata of the bourgeoisie, being closely connected with imperialism through the expansion of trade, sternly discountenanced the virulent expression of anti-foreign sentiment which was the characteristic feature of the Boxer Uprising. They hoped that legal conditions, favourable for the development of their class, would be created eventually through the constitutional efforts of the Reform Party. Meanwhile, they did not want that trade should be dislocated by the spread of a popular uprising.

The South had passed the initial stage of the bourgeois democratic revolution, characterised by elemental mass upheavals, when the North entered that stage. The South was mature for a higher stage of revolution which commenced there only a few years afterwards. The Taiping Rebellion represented the earlier stages of a bourgeois democratic revolution. The Boxer Uprising marked the beginning of the national democratic revolution. The element of nationalism (auti-imperialism) was latent in the former. It became the predominating feature of the latter. The Taiping Rebellion, the Reform Movement, the Boxer Uprising, the rise of the nationalist revolutionary party— all those events were connected with each other; they were so many links in the self-same chain of the development of social forces in modern China.

Notes

1. "The bulk of the wealthy and well-to-do classes are in China as in most countries averse to the extension of civil contests which, however patriotic or necesrary, to put an end to general oppression, are very apt to cause the destruction or forcible redistribution of special property. Now, the Taipings show, in matters of property, marks of an intention to adopt institutions of equality and communism, and though it is not a modern communism, but a compound of the communism of primitive Christianity and of ancient China, and therefore stamped with the sanction of religion and antiquity, still it sets the property holding classes as a body, whether learned or unlearned, altogether on the side of the imperialists (Manchus)." — Meadows, "The Chinese and Their Rebellions".

2. "Shall the fate of the dynasty be staked on a single blow ? It requires no peculiar sagacity to see that these Boxers' hopes of success are nothing but

shadow of a dream. The present crisis is all-serious, and although I have used every effort to explain its danger, I have laboured in vain. I have already submitted seven separate memorials denouncing these Boxers. They swarm in the streets of our capital like plague locusts, and it will be extremely difficult to disperse them." — Yung Lu's telegram, quoted in the diary of the Manchu noble Ching Shan.

3. "Ever since we opened up trade with the various countries, your noble country in particular had from first to last placed value upon commercial considerations, having in mind that, in China's commerce, your noble country really represents seven or eight parts out of ten, and for those reasons the treaty ports have been on excellent terms with your trading people. Now, by reasons of a mutual suspicion, that has grown up, circumstances have changed, and it is possible that China will be unequal to this strain. It is to be feared that, amongst the Powers, there must be those who, in view of her extent and resources, may entertain rival ambitious designs, the advantages and disadvantages of which to your noble country's principles of founding a State policy upon a commercial basis, ought to be easily imagined. At the present moment, China is at her wits end to raise funds for arms, and in order to get out of the difficult tangle, can but have recourse to the assistance of your noble country. We hope that you will evolve some plan, hold the bull's ear, and restore the situation. It is also hoped that your excellent views may be kindly notified as they are awaited with inexplicable anxiety."—Telegram of the Empress Dowager to the Queen of England, published in the *'Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society'* (Chinesa Branch), 1916.

4. Princess Der Ling. "Two Years in the Forbidden City".

5. *Ibid.*

6. Pott, F.H.L., :'History of the Outbreak in China."

7. Thayer, W.R., "Life and Letters of John Hay".

8. Beresford, "Tha Break-up of China".

9. *Ibid.*

10. *Ibid.*

11. "All the trials and tribulations of sixty years, all the humiliations which the sea had brought, all the weakness and evasion of the Court, had solidified into a massive, uncontrollable, psychosis. The Earth God has risen to his wrath, and there was blood in the angry sky '. Marching as in ancient days to an ominous drumming, the sword and spear-armed cultivators covered the country-side and entered the cities with terrible cry. Everything foreign was going—the dynasty as well as the red-haired barbarians."—Putnam Weale, "The Vanished Empire."

12. Pott, "The Outbreak in China".

13. Beresford, "The Break-up of China".

14. Smith, A.H,, "China in Convulsion".

15. Beresford, "The Break-up of China".

16. MacNair, "Modern Chinese History".

17. Count Witte, "Memoirs".

18. Anglo-Chinese Convention of July 1898.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PASSING OF THE MANCHUS

The diplomatic duel with and amongst the imperialist Powers, following upon the suppression of the Boxer Uprising, focussed all attention on Peking. Meanwhile, throughout the country, the disintegration of the old order went on apace, and the bourgeoisie, recovering from the defeat of the Reform Movement, gathered strength for the impending clash. In 1905 the country was promised a Constitution on the Western model. Preparations were ordered for the convocation of a National Assembly after several years. In 1907 the provincial governors were instructed to convene local legislative assemblies. An imperial edict was issued elaborately stipulating the details regarding the composition and functions of those assemblies. They met two years later and, as was to be expected, became active organs of a revolutionary agitation.

In the previous year, another decree had been issued postponing the grant of the promised Constitution for nine years with the argument that the inauguration of a new system of government must be preceded by an adequate preparation. A deputation visited Peking to memorialise the Emperor to put the proposed reforms into practice without any delay. It was given a cold reception, being dismissed with the imperious injunction that "the people shall patiently wait for the fulfilment of the grant after a systematic preparation". The answer to that rebuff was the gathering in Shanghai of the delegates from a number of provincial legislative assemblies to pass a resolution soliciting the Emperor to promulgate the promised Constitution within two years, instead of nine. Fearing that further obduracy might force the bourgeoisie to an open revolt, the Court tried for a compromise.

The Emperor ordered immediate convocation of a National Assembly pending the meeting of the Parliament in 1913. In other

words, the Shanghai Delegates' Assembly was invited to meet in Peking, where its behaviour could be under the watch of the Court. The object of that half-measure was to split the bourgeoisie—to have the representatives of the upper strata, closely connected with the established order, in the corrupting atmosphere of the feudal capital, where they could be bribed or bullied. But the situation in 1910 was very different from that in 1898. The representatives of the bourgeoisie were no longer isolated from their constituents, who had found an effective organ of expression in the provincial legislative assemblies. The National Assembly in Peking was mostly composed of conservative elements. It was not a popular body. But it could not help focussing the discontent ventilated through the provincial assemblies. Its first act disillusioned the reactionary Court clique. The imperial decree convoking it had granted it only a deliberative function. But once assembled, it assumed considerable legislative power. It not only claimed to control the budget, but even demanded that the whole executive should be submitted to its supervision. It went to tbe extent of advocating the formation of a government responsible to it. That was a definite challenge to absolute monarchy. The war was declared, although it was still waged within constitutional bounds. The Court was persuaded to give in a little. The old Grand Council was abolished in favour of a Cabinet, but the latter also was to be responsible only to the Emperor. It was an attempt to retain the old institution with a new label. The National Assembly was prorogued by an imperial decree before that fraudulent measure was taken.

The National Assembly had met very pompously, but it made a feeble protest only when it was dispersed after such a short time. It did not dare to declare itself in permanent session, defying the authority of monarchist absolutism. It did not have the courage to invoke the "sacred right of revolt", as the Third Estate did in the beginning of the French Revolution. Nevertheless, the doomed head of the Manchus could no longer be spared. The fatal blow fell from other quarters, even when the bourgeoisie was vacillating.

In consequence of recent economic developments in other parts of the country, Peking had ceased to be the heart of the nation. Therefore, the revolution broke out elsewhere. The clash took place in the far off Yangtse Valley. But its mere echo was powerful enough to pull down the decayed structure of the Manchu

monarchy and its parasitic Court. The South again became the scene of revolution. It was there that the bourgeoisie had outgrown the limits of feudal-patriarchal relations.

The southern provincial assemblies became organs of a revolutionary agitation. Their very existence raised an issue which vitally affected the structure of the feudal-patriarchal .State. The sore spot in the old regime was exposed. The struggle raged on the old issue of centralism versus provincial autonomy. A synthesis of these two antagonistic principles was the corner-stone of the Manchu monarchy. The appearance of a new class disturbed the synthesis. The very existence of the old system was endangered. Indeed, provincial autonomy, almost amounting to independence, had flourished under the protecting shadow of monarchist centralism. But so long as the feudal nobility administered the provinces, as practically independent domains, local autonomy did not conflict with the central authority. On the contrary, the former supported the latter. But the situation became entirely different when autonomy was claimed by provincial assemblies, from which non-feudal elements could not be excluded altogether.

The old system of local autonomy, flourishing under the imperial shadow, had begun to operate in the reverse direction from the closing years of the nineteenth century. Not a few provincial satraps had blossomed forth into full-fledged capitalists. Some of those metamorphosed feudal nobles were the poineers of the Reform Movement. They naturally sought to save the monarchy. But when, in course of time, no hope was left for the latter, they did not have much scruple to leave the sinking ship. The old system of local autonomy stood out in its disruptive character. The crisis came to a head when efforts were undertaken to make a fact out of the fiction of centralism. Provincial satraps, accustomed to rule practically as independent sovereigns, bitterly resented the appearance of special finance commissioners who came to take possession of the provincial purse for the benefit of the central government. It was that conflict between the centre of the Empire and its component parts which contributed more to the easy triumph of the revolution of 1911 than any other single factor. The Crown did not fall before an attack by the bourgeoisie. It toppled over as soon as the delicately balanced social pyramid was shaken by its internal contradictions. That peculiar class relation, constituting the back-

ground of the revolution of 1911, later on rendered the fight for the Republic so very abortive.

Ever since the Treaty of Shimonoseki, the Peking Government had been settling its international accounts by contracting foreign loans in return for the grant of concessions. Gradually, the operation of those loans began to encroach even upon the sources of revenue, until then considered by the provincial rulers to be their inviolable preserves. The Court could do whatever it wanted with the political sovereignty or territorial integrity of the country, The provincial rulers were more or less indifferent in that respect. But they protested as soon as their pockets were touched. They knew exactly how much was the worth of the divine authority which they derived from the Son of Heaven in return for their allegiance to him. They were not prepared to pay any more. When they were required to do so, they joined the bourgeoisie, instead of paying the higher price. They endorsed the demand for a revolutionary change in the financial policy of the government. Their demand, though not made in so many words, in practice was that, instead of selling the country to foreign banks, the monarchy should abdicate in favour of a native feudal-bourgeois alliance which would pay the price for the power thus transferred to them by raising loans inside the country. The situation was so revolutionary that the demand was supported even by such a faithful monarchist as Chang Chih-tung, who had shamelessly turned traitor to his reformist professions in a critical moment. But blood is not always thicker than water. Chang Chih-tung, of course, was a feudal lord by birth, a classical mandarin by profession, and an orthodox Confucian by culture. But all those attributes, glorified in tradition, counted for naught as against his newly acquired role of a capitalist. He betrayed his own class, culture, tradition and faith, and he was but a specimen of an entire section of the feudal nobility and patriarchal officialdom which stood, actively or objectively, behind the revolutionary agitation of the provincial assemblies, demanding local autonomy as against centralism. The forces operating through the provincial assemblies had come into existence much earlier than the creation of the latter. These had risen under the irresistible pressure of circumstances.

The alignment of classes underlying the political situation was indeed very complicated. In revolt against the enforcement of the programme of financial centralism, a section of the feudal nobility

and officialdom found themselves allied with the bourgeoisie demanding other reforms. On the other hand, the section of the bourgeoisie connected with the State finance and the operation of foreign loans, supported the reactionary policy of the Court. The final clash occurred over the question of a railway loan. The rival imperialist Powers had been bickering amongst themselves for the partition of the carcass of China. Finally, in 1911, the Chinese Government was persuaded to contract the so-called "Four Powers" Loan". The loan was given in return for the concession to construct two railway lines: one joining Hankow with Canton, and the other from Hankow up the Yangtse Valley. Ever since 1907, the local bourgeoisie had agitated against the projected loan. The provincial assemblies had served as the organs for that agitation. Even previously, in 1899, Chang Chih-tung had advised the Court against it. But the scheme was supported by a group of Chinese financiers—the notorious Shensi bankers, who for centuries controlled the State finance, and the compradores of Shanghai and Hongkong. The bourgeoisie and the gentry of the provinces, through which the projected railways were to pass, demanded the right to invest their own capital in the profitable enterprises.[1]

The revolutionary movement acquired new strength from the fact that a number of powerful provincial rulers lined up with the opposition to the central government. The army, national in name, formally owing allegiance to the Emperor, had always been an instrument in the hands of the provincial governors. It went with them. The conflict over the question of financing the projected railway construction found an echo in the army stationed in the Yangtse Valley. Nothing could make the Court appreciate more clearly the significance of the situation than the defection of the army. The power of the Manchus was maintained by a military dictatorship. When that dictatorship was no more, they had little hope left. What could they do when their own blood revolted, and the instrument of their own creation turned against themselves? The bourgeoisie could not openly challenge the monarchy. They sought to come to a compromise. When they were rebuffed by stupid reaction, they could do little to drive their demands home. They were themselves afraid of a revolution. They were as much hostile to a mass uprising as the Manchus themselves. But the revolutionising advance of capitalism is an objective force. It cannot be held back permanently by the timidity

of the bourgeoisie. Acting as the subjective force, the bourgeoisie can hasten the triumph of capitalism. If they fail, the advance is delayed, but it must take place sooner or later. The development of capitalism drove a wedge in the camp of reaction. A section of the ruling class was forced to be instrumental in the overthrow of the monarchy. They would have never done that, had events been determined by subjective factors alone. The weakness of the bourgeoisie was compensated by defection in the camp of reaction itself.

Beginning in Woochang, the insurrection spread swiftly through the centre and south of the country. Imperial troops, commanded by Yuan Shih-kai, captured the Han Cities, but the revolution was not to be crushed any more. Shanghai was the first to declare for a Republic Nanking was soon captured by the Republicans, who assembled there in a National Convention, and demanded abdication of the Manchu dynasty. As a counter-move, the scrapped National Assembly was recalled to meet in Peking. But the tide could no longer be checked. The National Assembly met at Peking. Now it was encouraged by the march of events in the South, and demanded that all the Princes of blood should be excluded from the government which must be responsible to the National Assembly. It further demanded immediate promulgation of the Constitution. It also demanded freedom of political parties and amnesty for political offenders. Faced with complete destruction, the Court accepted all the demands. Its nominee, Yuan Shih-kai, was appointed the Prime Minister. Thereupon, the National Assembly, in gratitude, passed a resolution favouring the continuation of the Ching dynasty as a constitutional monarchy.

But the National Assembly of Peking, meeting with the gracious permission of the Court, was no longer the mouthpiece of the revolution. More than half the provinces declared for the Republic. The revolt of the army spread. Those two facts alone repudiated the representative character of the Assembly. At that juncture, the ever-present and the all-powerful third factor intervened. The revolution was disturbing the Yangtse Valley—the main artery of trade. A prolonged war between the southern republicans and northern monarchists would aggravate that disturbance, and seriously injure trade. The foreign Powers intimated Yuan Shih-kai that they desired a speedy conclusion of peace. The last hope of the monarchy was gone. At last the foreign Powers gave their casting vote against it.

They had saved it from destruction twice; but since then it had become so very decayed and discredited that it was no longer worth saving. Besides, there were sound conservative elements in the Republican camp. A Republic with a man like Yuan Shih-Kai at the helm would be no less undesirable than the decrepit Manchu monarchy which did no in the least command the confidence of the nation, and consequently could not longer serve as the means for giving a legal semblance to the imperialist plunder of the country.

Reading the writing on the wall, the Manchu abdicated—not in favour of the Republic, but turning over all civil and military power to their nominee, Yuan Shih-kai.

Notes

1. The conclusion of the Hukuang Railway Loan, which meant the expropriation of thousands of Chinese small capitalists who had invested in the railway that was to be nationalised, now provided the direct grievance against the ruling dynasty,"—Tang Liang-Ii, "The Foundations of Modern China".

"The nationalisation of the projected railway, which was to connect it (Szechuan) with the Mid-Yangtse, was genuinely opposed by the people who had already collected large funds for its construction."—Putnam Weale, "The Vanished Empire".

CHAPTER IX

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE REPUBLIC

In the beginning of 1912 China became a Republic by the grace of the monarchy which had ruled and ruined the country for so many years by the grace of God. The Manchu dynasty was not overthrown. It simply passed away after having persisted for years in an untenable and impossible existence. The Manchus laid down the task of governing the country, when it became evident that it was entirely beyond their power to cope with the situation, but they did not relinquish their "divine right". They simply transferred the trust to a nominee of theirs, on whose faithfulness they could rely. The history of the ill-fated Republic, born under such evil auspices, is a tragic story. It is the story of the nominee discharging the trust inherited from his imperial masters. He regarded the Republic as the stepping stone to the throne. He attempted to restore the monarchy, not only as an ambitious individual, but as the representative of an entire social class. His attempt was the logical sequel to the circumstances under which the Manchus passed away. The decree of abdication was, indeed, a warrant for restoration.

The Manchu monarch issued several decrees while abdicating. Critical writers have described those documents as curious. They are much more than that. They were tendencious. They made it crystal clear that the decayed and discredited monarchy was advised by the astute and more intelligent members of the ruling class to step aside, thereby making it possible for them to handle the situation so as to stabilise the badly shaken old order. The bourgeoisie failed to see through that great swindle. They did not have the courage to attack the decrepit and demoralised ruling class determination.

According to the first edict of abdication, the republican form

of government was a gift of the benign monarch to his beloved people. "From the preference of the people's heart, the Will of Heaven can be discerned. Observing the tendencies of the age, on the one hand, and studying the opinions of the people, on the other, we and His Majesty the Emperor hereby vest the sovereignty in the people and decide in favour of a republican form of constitutional government. Thus we would gratify, on the one hand, the desires of the whole nation, who, tired of anarchy, are desirous of peace, and, on the other hand, would follow the footsteps of the ancient sages, who regarded the Throne as the sacred trust of the nation. Let Yuan Shih-kai organise with full powers a Provisional Republican Government, and confer with the republican army as to the methods of union, thus assuring peace to the people and tranquillity to the Empire."[1]

A really anti-monarchist movement could never be satisfied with such a declaration which was anything but abdication of the ruling dynasty. Nevertheless, not only the conservative National Assembly of Peking, but also the revolutionary Convention of Nanking believed that a Republic could be built upon the palpably deceptive foundation of that declaration. No wonder that the Republic, thus born with the gracious benediction of the Court, was so very ephemeral. It came into an unreal, but stormy existence, under a sentence of death.

A real Republic does not result from the investiture of the sovereign right upon the people by the abdicating monarch. To begin with, monarchy must be overthrown. The monarchy is not overthrown, never to be restored, unless the principle of sovereignty, on which it is based, is repudiated. Monarchy is the form of State reared upon certain specific class relations. It is overthrown only when they are subverted by the growth of new forces of production. For sanctifying the class relations which constitute the foundation of the monarchist State, sovereignty is regarded as the divine right. So long as that principle regarding the source of sovereignty is not challenged, the position of the monarch remains unassailable. The monarch can be deprived of his position, privilege and power only when it is claimed that these have not been invested on him by the Providence, but delegated to him by the people. Only then, democracy becomes legal and can claim a moral sanction. The people can take away what they have delegated.

The relation is reversed in the decree of abdication of the Manchus. The monarch is not dismissed by his employers for mismanaging the trust. On the contrary, he delegates his sacred trust to the people. Therefore, restoration any time would be legal. A Republic born with royal permission, under the sinister shadow of divine right, to remain bound by the traditional feudal-patriarchal social relations, could not be real. It was not a decree of abdication that the Manchu monarch signed. It was rather a will; it was a deed appointing one of his own choice to administer his trust. The sovereignty was not transferred to the people, but to Yuan Shih-kai. The second decree of abdication made the position still clearer. In that it was declared that the Emperor resigned only his political power, but the "Imperial Title is not abolished".[2]

The articles of abdication, drawn up by the Cabinet headed by Yuan Shih-kai, were fully satisfactory for the royal dynasty. The supreme and very significant function of the High Priest of society was felt to the Emperor. The Emperor lived side by side with the Republic. That fact itself was the indication of the real position. The function of the Emperor as the High Priest of society was the corner-stone of the feudal-patriarchal social relations, on the basis of wbich the Chinese monarchist State had been constructed. The political power of the monarch grew out of that exalted social office. Therefore, the resignation of political right could be only temporary, so long as the monarch was left in his basic social function. The Republic was to be a capitalist State. It could not possibly be built upon feudal-patriarchal social relations. The decay of those relations created the necessity for the rise of the Republican State. Still, the Chinese bourgeoisie believed in such an impossibility.

The feudal-patriarchal principles, expounded in the first two decrees, are emphasised in the third as warranting the abdication of the ruling dynasty. The imperial wish was the reflection of the Heavenly Will. Therefore, the members of the royal family, nobility, high State officials and military commanders were to abide by it. The people's will was altogether out of the picture. It was still the imperial wish which dictated.

Armed with power, received from the monarchy, which abdicated— only to be restored at the earliest possible opportunity—Yuan Shih-kai began his fight against the revolution. The Republic could not survive that clash. Indeed, no Republic grew out of the collapse

of the monarchy. What followed that inevitable event was anarchy. It gave birth to the ugly demon of militarism which devoured China for years. Though the threadbare mantle of the discredited monarchy fell upon Yuan Shih-kai's shoulders, that was not sufficient to make a dictator of him. On the collapse of the monarchy, the delicate thread of allegiance to the Son of Heaven snapped. It had held the country together under the nominal authority of a centralised State. The disruptive principles of the feudal-patriarchal State thus freed from the only factor of cohesion, the forces of decentralisation ran amok. The factors contributing to the revolution had developed disproportionately. While disintegration of the old order was complete, the forces making for the new were still but insufficiently in operation. They were still too weak to be the master of the situation. Chaos and anarchy were inevitable in such a situation, which was made still worse by the operation of an extraneous factor, namely, foreign imperialism.

The monarchy having withdrawn itself in the Forbidden City, with ample provision for a comfortable existence,[3] there began the struggle between an incipient dictatorship and the feeble strivings for a representative government. The would-be dictator, Yuan Shih-kai, commenced his abortive Napoleonic career as the Prime Minister of the new Government. He was theoretically responsible to the National Assembly. But he was raised to that exalted position by an imperial decree, on the tacit understanding that his mission was to save the monarchy.

As a protege of Li Hung-chang, young Yuan had a successful career. But after the fall of his powerful patron, he was suddenly hurled down from the height of office. His treachery towards the ill-fated Emperor Kuang Hsue had not been forgotten by the less reactionary members of the Court, and his insatiable ambition was regarded with suspicion and alarm. On the death of the Empress Dowager, he was dismissed from office. Thereupon, he retired to his native village in Honan. He lived in affluence upon the vast fortune he had made while in office, and watched events, waiting for his chance. The "model army" he had organised under the patronage of Li Hung-chang was there, still faithful to him. With that powerful trump in his hand, the would-be dictator watched the game.

When the revolution broke out, it was to Yuan Shih-kai that

the Court appealed, just as he had expected. Before emerging from his retreat as the saviour of the situation, Yuan made his terms. If the Empire could be saved only by him, he should be its actual ruler. The Court conceded to everything Yuan demanded. His first act was to betray his patrons, He was prepared to abide by the monarchist principle, and was determined to defend the feudal-patriarchal social relations. But he wanted to be the supreme ruler himself.

Although his "model army" succeeded in capturing the Han Cities, Yuan was not slow to appreciate the gravity of the task he had undertaken. He was reluctant to push farther his initial victory— to the centre of the revolution. On the contrary, he ordered his troops to evacuate Nanking. Superficial observers were mystified by his behaviour. The Court was puzzled. But he was acting according to a plan known only to himself. He was not sure how his "model army" would fare if it went too far in the revolutionary territories. Armies, hitherto considered to be faithful to the monarchy, were defecting. There was no reason to be confident that his army would always remain an exception. Its integrity was his trump card. He was reluctant to speculate with it. Holding it in reserve, he could dictate terms to others. Secondly, he wanted the monarchy to disappear, not to be replaced by a real Republic, but to clear the road for the realisation of his own ambition. With these considerations, Yuan Shie-kai acted deliberately. On the other hand, he betrayed the monarchy which had placed itself at his mercy; and on the other, he prepared for the betrayal of the new-born Republic which also was delivered presently to his trust.

Challenging the authority of the resurrected National Assembly of Peking, the revolutionary Convention of Nanking declared the inauguration of the Republic. Sun Yat-sen had just returned from exile. He was elected the Provisional President. It was in reply to that move of the bourgeoisie, bidding for power, that Yuan Shih-kai induced the Manchus to abdicate, transferring the sovereign power to himself. The arch-reactionary, devout monarchist, over-night became a staunch Republican. His telegram informing the Provisional Government of Nanking that the Ching dynasty had abdicated was a suggestion for the latter to wind itself up. Behind that gentle suggestion, stood his "model army" and all the forces of reaction which had abandoned the Manchu monarchy as a

sinking ship.[4]

Nothing more than a mere hint was needed for making the bourgeoisie cower. Replaying to the telegram announcing the abdication of the ruling dynasty, Sun Yat-sen, on behalf of the revolutionary Convention and its constituents, expressed pleasure to the development in the North, and congratulated Yuan Shih-kai upon his conversion to the Republican faith. But the Provisional President of the new-born Republic dared question the right of the abdicating monarchy to name the head of the Republican Government.[5] However, in the same telegram, Sun Yat-sen declared his willingness to resign in favour of Yuan Shih-kai. He invited to come to Nanking for a conference with the object of settling all matters. Sun Yat-sen even did not wait for an answer to his offer to resign. He did so immediately after sending the telegram to the would-be dictator. That act of his was greatly praised as a noble example of idealistic patriotism. In reality, it represented sheer cowardice on the part of the bourgeoisie, which surrendered without a struggle. The resignation of Sun Yat-sen[6] meant the fall of the Republic. Having made a feeble protest against the prerogative of the fallen manarchy to set up a Republican Government, the bourgeoisie humbly accepted the position of subservience, and killed the Republic at the behest of the incipient dictator.

While resigning, Sun Yat-sen warmly recommended Yuan Shih-kai for the presidentship of the Republic. "Should he (Yuan) be elected to serve the Republic, he would surely prove himself a most loyal servant of the State. Besides, Mr. Yuan is a man of political experience, to whose constructive ability our united nation looks forward for the consolidation of its interests. Therefore, I venture to express my personal opinion, and invite your honourable Assembly carefully to consider the future welfare of the State, and not to miss the opportunity of electing one who is worthy of your election."[7] Such was the behaviour of the chosen leader of the more radical section of the bourgeoisie. Only a few hours after having made a futile protest against the right of the fallen Manchus to turn over all power to an individual, the Provisional President of the Republic recommended that very individual as the most suitable head of the new-born Republic. There was absolutely no ground to believe in the sincerity of Yuan Shih-kai's sudden conversion to the Republican faith. His whole career and social affiliation made his

allegiance to the Republic very doubtful. Even after his appointment as the Prime Minister, charged with the task of organising a constitutional Government, he stated publicly that "the institution of a Republic would mean the instability of a rampant democracy, of dissension and partition", and that it would create chaos, injuring the interests of the Empire.[8] Yet, only three months after he had so definitely expressed his hostility to Republicanism, Sun Yat-sen recommended him as the best custodian for the young Republic!

How did that happen? The explanation is to be found in Sun Yat-sen's letter of resignation. He resigned on the ground that "according to the telegram that our delegate, Dr. Wu, was directed to send to Peking, I was to undertake to resign in favour of Mr. Yuan, when the Emperor had abdicated, and Mr. Yuan had declared his political views in support of the Republic." So, after all, the prophet of petit-bourgeois radicalism did not resign as an act of personal magnanimity. He was forced to do so by the bourgeoisie and the southern military commanders who had given only a halfhearted support to the Republic.[9] As soon as a "Republican Government" was sanctioned by the Son of Heaven, the one growing up from the bosom of the mother earth had to commit suicide. It could avoid that disgraceful fate only by mobilising the masses in its support. But that way it would not travel. Therefore, its bourgeois defenders were obliged to swallow all constitutional scruples, and reconcile themselves to the continuation of the old order under a fraudulent label.

The blood suppression of the Boxer Uprising had left the country in a state of great demoralisation. A seething mass discontent was still there; but it could find no powerful expression. It was no longer the old-fashioned native army which confronted the defeated forces of the revolution. Hundreds of the most up-to-date foreign guns were levelled upon the country, ready to crush any revolutionary outbreak. Dozens of battle-ships, equipped with formidable instruments of destruction, kept a constant watch not only over the sea-ports, but patrolled the inland waters as well. Foreign troops were held in readiness to invade the country on the slightest pretext, to spread death and destruction, far and wide. Before such a formidable array of forces, the defeated and disorganised forces of revolution were naturally terrorised. But fear is not an effective check upon discontent, when there is nothing or not much to lose.

So, even in the atmosphere of terror, the masses continued in a rebellious mood. The burden on them had grown even more crushing than in the closing days of the last century. Hunger, famine and destruction were as widespread as ever, if not more so.

That perennial, incurable discontent of the masses contributed to the rapid spread of the Republican movement during the year preceding the revolution of 1911. The rebelliousness of the masses was reflected in the stout opposition to autocratic centralism put up by the Provincial Assemblies as soon as they were inaugurated as a reformist measure. The army was also in the process of disintegration. There were numerous cases of defection, desertion and mutiny, individually as well as *en masse.* The situation reached the climax when, in 1910-11, crops failed in the central and southern provinces, and "the Yangtse Valley was overrun with swarms of homeless and starving people".[10] Such was the background on which the revolution was staged.

The bourgeoisie, however, sought to set up a Republic not with the help of the revolutionary masses but with the approval of, and in alliance with, the less reactionary section of the feudal nobility and officialdom, which recognised the impossibility of maintaining the old order any longer under an absolute monarchist regime. Upon its inauguration, the Provisional Republican Government of Nanking issued an appeal "To^Our Foreign Friends", which was a statement of its entire policy. Therein, it was indicated which course the bourgeoisie were going to choose. The Provisional Republican Government of the bourgeoisie not only dissociated itself from mass revolt, the only factor it could rely upon; it declared its determination to combat all revolutionary mass outbreaks. It was eager to enlist the patronage of foreign imperialism, on the one hand, and to reassure the quasi-monarchist supporters of the Republic, on the other. "We have controlled the forces of evil in a manner which should characterise this revolution as the least sanguinary in the history of the world, when the sins of the country and the nature of the masses are taken into consideration. We have striven for order, and created no chaos in the provinces, cities and towns that have of their own volition come under our banner. We have, in short, taken every possible step to protect vested interests, safeguard international obligations, secure the continuance of commerce, and shield educational and religious institutions; and what is even more

important, we have striven continually to maintain law and order, sustain peace, and promote a constructive policy upon sound and enduring ground."[11]

That damaging declaration predetermined the action of the bourgeoisie. It doomed the Republic to an ignominious death before it was hardly bora. Instead of laying down the foundation of a democratic Republic, to be built upon the principle of popular sovereignty, it pledged the bourgeoisie to support the caricature Napoleonism of Yuan Shih-kai, in which form the old order subsequently continued. It paved the way for the resignation of the popular representative in favour of the imperial nominee. It pledged the agreement of the bourgeoisie that the Republic should not be the conquest of democracy, but a gracious gift of the discredited Son of Heaven.

It was not unprecedented for the Chinese bourgeoisie to betray the revolution. Their class acted similarly even during the Great French Revolution. When the multitude of Paris was threatening to make a clean sweep of the old order, a task the middle-class representatives assembled at Versailles were so reluctant to tackle, Mirabeau made his famous speech in the first joint meeting of the Three Estates, declaring in essence: Better the King and the Court, than the people in revolt.[12] He categorically disassociated himself and those he represented, from the people to whom they had until then been appealing for support in the struggle against the Court clique. He warned the members of the National Assembly to be on their guard against "seditious auxiliaries". He called upon the Assembly to help the maintenance of law and order, threatened by the imminent uprising of the people. As declared by its accredited leader, the National Assembly undertook "to maintain order, to preserve public tranquillity, and to defend the authority of law and of the Ministers." The spokesman of the bourgeoisie even appealed to the deputies to rally round the King in the face of the popular revolt.

There is a striking resemblance between that speech of Mirabeau and the Manifesto of the Provisional Republican Government of China. But there was a great difference as well. In France, the bourgeoisie had their demands already accepted; the Third Estate had won the position of equality in the Estates General. Only then the bourgeoisie turned their back upon the democratic principles, so proudly pronounced by their leader in the outcaste Assembly meeting

in the Tennis Court of Versailles. But the Chinese bourgeoisie surrendered before the fight had scarcely begun.

The anxiety of the French bourgeoisie could not save the old order. They proposed to save the monarchy and defend the established order through the instrumentality of its reactionary laws. But the Parisian proletariat was there to dispose. In China, the situation did not develop in a similar way. A mass revolt was there as the background of the struggle for the overthrow of the old order. The working class, however, was not mature enough to determine the development of the struggle. Therefore, the Republicanism of the radical wing of the bourgeoisie could not give birth to Jacobinism. It surrendered before Girondism, which proposed to maintain the decayed old order, although the monarchy could no longer be saved.

Sun Yat-sen resigned in favour of Yuan Shih-kai, because the bourgeoisie wanted him to do so. The future of Chinese politics was determined neither by the reactionary National Assembly of Peking, nor by the revolutionary Convention of Nanking, It was decided in a secret conference at Shanghai between an envoy of Yuan Shih-kai and the representative of the bourgeoisie, Wu Ting-fang. The latter, as the Foreign Minister of the Provisional Republican Government, had drafted the historic Manifesto just before he went to the conference. Then, there were the consular representatives of foreign Powers, whose desire, expressed in no uncertain terms, influenced the situation decisively. They made it clear to the Chinese that their respective Governments would not tolerate any disturbance of peace; so very necessary for trade. The representative of the Provisional Republican Government could point out that the side he represented had already announced its agreement with the necessity of maintaining peace at all cost, even ac the cost of the revolution and the Republic.

In the Manifesto, issued just a month ago, the Republican bourgeoisie had with pride claimed credit for the accomplishment that they had not permitted "the forces of evil" to assert themselves. What were those "forces of evil"? They were the rebellious masses, who alone could make a success of the revolution, sweep away the old order, and establish a real Republic. The bourgeoisie also congratulated themselves upon having guaranteed that the Chinese revolution would be bloodless, the least sanguinary, at any rate, They believed to have found that guarantee by curbing the operation of

the rebellious masses, by condemning the latter as the "forces of evil". But in their anxiety to make the revolution bloodless, they helped the creation of a state of affairs, in which the entire country was flooded with blood for decades to come. Opposed to the least disturbance of the reactionary laws of the old order, the bourgeoisie were instrumental in plunging the country in a fierce wilderness of chaos and disorder, in which reaction thrived, but the Republic was lost. The revolution was bloodless, in so far as it did not spill a drop of ruling class blood; but from the point of view of the masses, no such credit can be granted to it.

The bourgeoisie appealed for the patronage of foreign imperialism on the ground that they had protected vested interests; to do that in that crisis was to kill the revolution. To protect vested interests at that time was to spare reaction. The object of the revolution was to disrupt the decayed pre-capitalist property relations. Pre-revolutionary vested interests were inseparably connected with those relations. Of course, the bourgeoisie primarily meant capitalist property; but the promotion even of that demanded the disruption of feudal-patriarchal social relations. By their own profession, the bourgeoisie were opposed to such revolutionary measures as were indispensable for creating conditions in which a Republic could rise. The readiness to "safeguard internaiional obligations" was still worse. "International obligations" had ruined China economically, disrupted it politically, and were responsible for obstructing all progress. To safeguard those obligations, therefore, was to sell the revolution for securing foreign support for an imaginary Republic. Repudiation of foreign obligations, was in the very nature of a revolution having for its object the overthrow of a corrupt monarchy, which had contracted those obligations.

Already then, the upper strata of the bourgeoisie were consciously counter-revolutionary. In, the Manifesto "To Our Foreign Friends", they admitted that "the sins of the country and the nature of the masses" made bloodshed justifiable. But respect for "vested interests", foreign obligations" and the laws of reaction induced them to be opposed to a radical change of social relations which was warranted by the "sinful" acts of the ruling class and the conditions of mass revolt created by those acts. They were afraid of calling a thing by its proper name. The feudal-patriarchal ruling class had sinned unpardonably against the masses and the interests of the nation as a whole. Instead of indicting the sinner boldly, the bourgeoisie hid

themselves behind false generalisations, laying at the door of "the country" the responsibility for the sins committed against itself. The welfare of the country demanded severe punishment of the sinners. The conditions of the country cried aloud for the extermination of feudal-patriarchal reaction and for freedom from the galling obligations imposed by its ally, foreign imperialism. The masses were ready to take revenge. The bourgeoisie did not fail to notice the "nature of the masses." But instead of allying themselves with the forces of revolution, they turned their face against mass revolt, and thus supported the sinners against the interests of the country.

It is reported that, in the Shanghai conference, the representative of the bourgeoisie, Wu Ting-fang, insisted upon the replacement of the monarchy by a Republican form of government. But the concessions made by himself on all the vital demands of the revolution rendered the insistence upon a Republican Government a sham. The bourgeoisie, therefore, could not get even a sham Republic. They had to capitulate completely before the monarchy agreed to abdicate conditionally. The resignation of Sun Yat-sen was decided at the Shanghai conference which agreed with the imperial edict of December 28, 1911, that the form of government should be chosen by a National Convention.[13] Meanwhile, the bourgeoisie must forego all claim to power, which should be held in trust by the arch-reactionary Yuan Shih-kai as the chosen heir of the monarchy; and not only Sun Yat-sen should resign, but the Provisional Republican Government should also be dissolved, and the revolutionary Convention make a pilgrimage to Peking to be slaughtered by the new High Priest on the altar of the Son of Heaven. Sut Yat-sen resigned according to that decision made without consulting him. After that decision, his feeble protest against the prerogative of the abdicating monarch to appoint the head of the Republican Government did not in the least improve the situation. It was utterly ineffective, as it was bound to be. The Republic was a still-born child.

Fhe monarchy was not overthrown; yet it consented to abdicate. That proved that the old regime was thoroughly untenable. On the other hand, the abject capitulation of Republicanism before native reaction and foreign imperialism exposed the impotence of the bourgeoisie. They were unable to rescue the country from the ruins of the old order. The consequence unavoidably was chaos and anarchy. The imbecility of the bourgeoisie resulted from their fear of the revolution.

They wanted political power without a struggle. They tried to set up a Republic by betraying the revolution.

Sun Yat-sen's resignation has been glorified as a splendid act of self-abnegation. It certainly did represent self-abnegation on the part of the bourgeoisie. But it was not an act of magnanimity; it was cowardice.

The alignment of forces was clear. The desire of the provincial rulers of the South to abandon the sinking ship of reaction was the immediate cause of the revolution. Once the monarchy was out of the way, those more intelligent reactionaries would naturally not submit themselves to a Republican Government controlled by the bourgeoisie. They would rather support Yuan-Shih-kai, who represented their class. If the Provisional Republican Government stood firmly by the professed principles of democracy and constitutionalism, the schism in the camp of reaction would be closed up, and the Republic must be defended in a ruthless class struggle. It had been demonstrated more than once in history that in such a crisis the bourgeois revolution can be saved only by the action of the masses against the bourgeoisie themselves.

Earlier in the period of bourgeois revolution, the working class does not act as an independent force. Its active support is enlisted by the radical section of the bourgeoisie, who later on, under the pressure of the masses, go farther than they would go by themselves. Such was the case during the Great French Revolution. Later in the period, the working class acts as an independent factor, and the bourgeoisie as a class ally themselves with reaction against the revolution, it was so in the Russian Revolution of 1905, and partially even during the European revolutions of 1848. In China, it was neither this nor that. The development of classes, and consequently of the political situation, corresponded with that in the earlier stages of the period of world bourgeois revolution. The working class was not yet ready to act independently. But even the radical section of the bourgeoisie, represented by Sun Yat-sen, was unwilling to lead the rebellious masses in a revolutionary struggle.

A real Republic could rise in China only out of a fierce struggle with the purpose of annihilating decomposed feudal-patriarchal reaction, root and branch. The radical bourgeoisie were afraid of that perspective. Therefore, they capitulated, and Sun Yat-sen resigned. His refusal to resign would have precipitated a situation in

which Republicanism must identify itself with mass revolt. The radical bourgeoisie could defend their Republicanism only by placing themselves at the head of a revolutionary struggle of the masses. The Republic could be saved only by the rise of Jacobinism. But bourgeois radicalism failed to develop into Jacobinism. Sun Yat-sen resigned to avoid a civil war. The tragedy, however, is that the civil war was not avoided On the contrary, a whole period of devastating civil war was opened up by the capitulation of the bourgeoisie.

The revolutionary abortion of 1911 created conditions for the birth of militarism, that monstrous child of superannuated reaction which ate into the very vitals of the country for years to come. Only a triumphant revolution could establish a Republican State in the place of the vanished Empire. The failure of the bourgeoisie to lead the revolution left the country without any effective central authority. The caricature Napoleonism of Yuan Shih- kai, so readily and liberally supported by foreign Powers, ended in a despicable debacle. A triumphant bourgeois revolution is the basis of Napoleonism which rises to sweep away the debris of the old order. The object of the military dictatorship of Napoleon was to consolidate the position of the bourgeoisie. It was not a fraudulent continuation, but the grave-digger, of the old order. Yuan Shih-kai, on the contrary, tried to set up a military dictatorship with the object of galvanising the old order. So his ambition was doomed to Failure. His failure, indeed, was not due to any effective opposition of the bourgeoisie. The conditions which had rendered the existence of the monarchy utterly untenable, operated also against the attempt to perpetuate a disintegrated social system in a slightly altered form. The Manchu monarchy collapsed not before an attack from outside. Its downfall was due to the operation of the centrifugal tendency inherent in its own structure. Therefore, the monarchy as a central authority disappeared. But all its evils remained intact, running rampant in a wild fury. The country was soon broken up into various regions under military dictators, constantly engaged in ruinous civil wars.

On the resignation of Sun Yat-sen, the Republican Convention at Nanking obediently betook itself to Peking. Yuan Shih-kai declined to accept the invitation to grace by his presence the seat of the transitory Republic. Even after the capitulation of the bourgeoisie, the atmosphere in the central and southern provinces remained uncertain. Yuan's model troops had been easily disarmed in Nanking

by the Republican army recruited from the rebellious masses. The Republic surrendered itself to his tender mercies; but the masses were still there in an ugly mood. So Yuan Shih-kai decided to stay out of the danger zone until he had the situation well in hand. He had a little revolt staged among his own troops stationed in Peking as a plausible pretext for his refusal to make the promised pilgrimage to the shrine of the Republic. The visitors from Nanking persuaded themselves to accept the explanation and quietly dispersed, leaving with the would be dictator the prerogative to convene the National Convention which was to decide what form of government the country needed. Yuan Shih-kai was thus fully entrusted with the conduct of State affairs, even without taking the oath of allegiance to the Republic.

The National Convention assembled in April 1913, and became the scene of a battle between the tendencies of local autonomy and centralism. The struggle between the first Parliament of China and Yuan Shih-kai is generally interpreted as a tussle between popular representatives and an unscrupulous individual aspiring for dictatorial power. The main issues involved in the struggle were the election of the President and the so-called Reconstruction Loan, the latter being the more important. In order to establish his dictatorship, Yuan Shih-kai needed money. He must buy over the support of the practically independent rulers of the central and southern provinces. Their disaffection had brought down the monarchy, and it was with their military aid that the bourgeoisie had set up the transitory Republic. The foreign Powers had promised him a loan of twenty-five million pounds. But his competence to secure the offered financial assistance for laying the foundation of his dictatorship was conditional upon his election to the Chief Magistracy of the country. There was difficulty on the way. He did not have a majority in the new Parliament. He overcame the difficulty with a little *coup de main,* in which he was fully aided by the foreign Powers.

An advisory council had been set up to act as the Provisional Government, pending the election of the Parliament. Upon the latter assembling, the advisory council automatically ceased to exist. Yet, on the unconstitutional authority of that non-existing body, Yuan Shih-kai signed the Reconstruction Loan. Faced with that accomplished fact, the Parliament could either rise in open revolt against the usurper, or abdicate. It chose the latter alternative. The anti-Yuan

Republican Bloc was composed of heterogeneous elements. It fell to pieces as soon as Yuan came into possession of the means to buy up the dubious supporters of the Republic. Consequently, the Parliament elected an avowed monarchist to the presidency of the shadow Republic. The bourgeoisie were once again beaten by decayed reaction, for they would not lead a revolution. They hoped to establish a Republican Government with the support of a section of the feudal ruling class representing the tendency to break away from the nominal central authority for the sake of their own aggrandisement. The Republican bourgeoisie voted for Yuan Shih-kai for the same reason as had persuaded Sun Yat-sen to resign. They feared that, defeated by the Parliament, Yuan would openly oppose and overthrow the Republic. They would rather kill the Republic themselves than let him have the credit. It did not occur to them that the possible revolt of reaction could be overwhelmed by the forces of revolution which were there, ready to be led. Their dubious allies went over to Yuan Shih-kai as soon as the latter was in a position to satisfy them. Thus deserted, the bourgeoisie could save the Republic only by appealing to the masses to rush to its defence. But the bourgeoisie again shrank before a revolutionary civil war, and thus allowed Yuan Shih-kai, not a victory, but a simple walk-over.

The provincial officials were however afraid that, with financial resources at his command, Yuan Shih-kai might try to deprive them of the independence of a costly central authority, gained on the fall of the monarchy. Therefore, they supported the bourgeoisie in opposing the Reconstruction Loan. The issue of the Hukuang Railway Loan had precipitated the First Revolution of 1911. The controversy over the Reconstruction Loan provoked the uprising of July 1913, which came to be known as the Second Revolution. Again, it was not a revolt for asserting the principles of representative government as against the usurpation of autocratic power by an ambitious individual; it was simply the old struggle between the forces of a dictatorial centralism and the disruptive tendency of local autonomy—both born of decayed reaction.

In addition to the opposition to the Reconstruction Loan, there was another cause for the July uprising. As the President of the Republic, Yuan Shih-kai began to remove from their posts those military commanders and provincial officials who had either actively supported, or tacitly sympathised with, the revolution of 1911.

The vacant posts were filled with men of his choice, whose loyalty was secured with the money provided by foreign banks. The Second Revolution was a military mutiny organised with the cooperation of army officers sacked by Yuan. It was easily suppressed. The rebels were very badly equipped. There was no money to pay the soldiers. Even then, the masses were not called upon to defend the Republic. On the other side, Yuan Shih-kai not only had his "model army", but possessed plenty of money which he spent liberally for causing defections in the rebel camp. For example, when the Northern Army was attacking Nanking, the rebel forces were deserted by all the leaders. Still, they resisted heroically. The defence of Nanking was, indeed, the most brilliant event of the Second Revolution. In the beginning, the navy supported the rebels. Its defection finally turned the scale. It declared "neutrality". The neutrality of the navy was purchased with money supplied by the foreign banks of Shanghai, not as a loan, but on account of their own administrative expenses.[1]*

Upon the collapse of the Second Revolution, Sun Yet-sen and other leaders of the Republican movement fled from the country. The failure of the First as well as of the Second Revolution was due to the inability and unwillingness of the bourgeoisie to connect the Republican movement with the widespread and deep-rooted discontent of the masses. Neither the agitation conducted by the Provincial Assemblies during the year immediately preceding the revolution, nor the Provisional Constitution adopted by the revolutionary Convention of Nanking, nor the struggle of the Parliament against Yuan Shih-kai, nor again the revolt against his caricature Napoleonism, touched the vital social problems which lay at the very root of all the troubles. As a matter of fact, the bourgeoisie were always very anxious to run away from those problems; repeatedly, they declared their hostility to mass movements which they themselves fomented by their own agitation. Economic questions, vitally concerning the masses of the people, had no place in the Republican programme. Ruinous taxation, unbearable feudal exactions, soaring prices, brutal pre-capitalist exploitation, and innumerable other questions of similar nature, did not receive any attention from the bourgeoisie. Indifferent to their causes, the bourgeoisie were determined to check the "forces of evil", by which they meant mass revolt.

The basic task of a bourgeois revolution is not simply to secure the abdication of monarchy; it is to abolish the social system buttressed by the monarchist State. It is to destroy feudalism or any other form of pre-capitalist social relations. It was not the Declaration of Rights that laid the foundation of the Republic in France. That revolutionary task was accomplished by the decrees abolishing feudal prerogatives issued under the pressure of peasant revolt. During the French Revolution also the bourgeoisie was reluctant to make a clean sweep of feudalism until they were forced to do so by the revolutionary action of the masses.

In the China of 1911-13 conditions were not sufficiently ripe for the bourgeois revolution to come under the influence of the revolutionary masses. The bourgeoisie remained in their unholy alliance with one section of the feudal ruling class, in a feeble and half-hearted struggle against the other. In every critical moment, the schism in the camp of reaction closed up, and the bourgeoisie were forced to submission. In the absence of the spontaneously revolutionary action of the toiling masses, operating as the driving force of the situation, petit-bourgeois radicalism could not develop into Jacobinism. It degenerated into futile intrigues devoid of all social significance.

The Provisional Republican Constitution became the bone of contention between Yuan Shih-kai and the National Assembly. It had been framed by the revolutionary Convention of Nanking dominated by radical Republicanism. That rather lengthy document of fifty-six articles prescribes in detail the formal, legal and political rights of the people, emphasises upon their duty to pay taxes and serve in the army; but it contains not one single word about relieving the unbearable economic burden on the masses. It occupies itself with elaborating checks and balances upon the executive power with the object of opening the doors of the State apparatus for the bourgeoisie. The toiling masses composing the overwhelming majority of the people are entirely forgotten. They are left perishing under the iron-heel of feudal-patriarchal exploitation. The pseudo-Republican Constitution concerned itself exclusively with high politics, reflecting the ambition of the bourgeoisie to enter the heaven of political power. Consequently, it was but natural that the masses remained more or less indifferent to the dispute over issues which had no direct relation with the realities of the situation

as far as they were concerned. Unlike the Taiping Revolt and the Boxer Uprising, the Revolutions of 1911 and 1913 were more or less isolated from the masses. The former two, particularly the Taiping Revolt, had raised vital social issues, and had therefore embraced the masses of the people. The roots of the monarchy had been smashed by those earlier revolutions.]n 1911 the bourgeoisie inherited the victory of the earlier revolutionary mass movement; but the victory proved to be a dead-see fruit, even for themselves, as they failed to carry on the revolution.

The defeat of the Second Revolution completely disrupted the Opposition Bloc in the National Assembly. Consequently, it elected Yuan Shih-kai President for five years. An unholy alliance had brought the shadow republic to a precarious existence. It was falling asunder even before the Second Revolution. When the radical bourgeoisie, led by Sun Yat-sen and Huang Hsing began to agitate for a revolt against Yuan's projected dictatorship, the official elements dissented; they had joined the Republican movement for their own purpose. They not only stepped out of the alliance with people whose political ideas they had half-heartedly shared, but openly went over to the other side. Some of the southern Governors, who had previously sympathised with the Republican movement, telegraphed to Yuan Shih-kai complaining against the activities of the radical bourgeoisie. On the eve of the Second Revolution, thirteen provincial Governors sided with Yuan Shih-kai; only four still remained doubtfully loyal to the Republic. Even the big bourgeoisie decamped. The merchants of Shanghai and the Yangtse Valley denounced the "seditious propaganda" of the Kuo Min Tang, and appealed to the National Assembly to suppress it. In response to that appeal, the representatives of the big bourgeoisie in the Parliament disassociated themselves from the Tung Ming Hui (the Opposition Block), and formed a new party under the leadership of the veteran of the Reform Movement, Liang Chih-chao. The new party openly supported Yuan Shih-kai on every question and called for the suppression of the Kuo Min Tang. Under constant provocation, the radical bourgeoisie went a little farther than they had originally dared; but still not far enough. Even then, they did not dare to touch the social problems of the revolution, and consequently could not come in contact with the masses, whose action alone could make a clean sweep of the old order and establish the Republic. Taking place in the

condition of such an unequal distribution of forces, the Second Revolution was easily defeated.

Yuan Shih-kai felt himself secure in the saddle. He had the radical members of the National Assembly unseated on the ground of their complicity in the July insurrection. The Kuo Min Tang, deserted by its discrediting allies, was dissolved. Before that Yuan Shih-kai secured his election to the presidentship for ten years, with the right of re-election. On that occasion, he openly proclaimed his intention to assume dictatorial power. He wanted to "rule without interference, in accordance with ancient traditions". He complained that "restrictions have been placed on my authority", and warned that he would no longer tolerate such restrictions.

The Republic was no more. The ghost of the monarchy usurped the presidential chair. The King had passed away, but ancient tradition still remained in force as the guiding principle of the State. The Parliament was replaced by the Council of State. It scrapped the Republican Constitution, and adopted a new one, giving all power to the President. What still remained to be done, was to efface the shadow of the Republic. Resurrection of the monarchy commenced. The first act was to reinstate the worship of Confucius and the annual ceremonial offering in the Temple of Heaven as an official State function. While abdicating politically, the Manchu Emperor had reserved these functions to himself. Once the religious rights, reserved' to the monarch, were resurrected, a King could no longer be dispensed with. Yuan Shih-kai was there as the most favoured candidate. He had worked untiringly for the purpose. Bourgeois liberals like Liang Chih-chao had supported Yuan Shih-kai in his struggle against the danger of revolution: they were staggered by his scheme to ascend the throne. But it was not an unexpected development. Having not been overthrown by a triumphant revolution, sweeping away its social foundations, a monarchy is bound to be restored. The Republicanism of the Chinese bourgeoisie, even of the radical wing standing behind the Kuo Min Tang, was a sheer mockery, because it fell so far short of advocating a social revolution for which the conditions of the country cried aloud.

For enlisting the support of the bourgeoisie, Yuan Shih-kai did not rely entirely on "ancient traditions". He wanted to justify his plan for the restoration of monarchy also with the modern

concepts of government. His American adviser, Dr. Goodnow, testified that Republican Government was not suitable for China. The stage was set for Yuan Shih-kai to be crowned as the founder of a new ruling dynasty. The dictator was stricken down when he had almost ascended the throne with the active help of foreign imperialism and the co-operation of the subservient native bourgeoisie. Forces sufficiently strong had not yet developed to build a new order in China out of the ruins of the decayed feudal-patriarchal reaction, which was maintained in a fossilised existence with the aid of foreign imperialism. But its consolidation was rendered impossible by its own contradictions. Forces of disintegration had brought down the monarchy. They operated also against the establishment of a dictatorship or the restoration of monarchy.

The military ruler of Yunan joined the radical bourgeoisie in a revolt against Yuan Shih-kai's plan to be the founder of a new ruling dynasty. To prevent the spread of the movement, called the Third Revolution of 1915, Yuan's friends and supporters, foreign and native, advised him to abandon his scheme. Defeated in his long laid plan, and discredited in consequence, Yuan Shih-kai died of a broken heart. Some believe that he was quietly removed by those who found in him an embarrassment for themselves. It is immaterial how he died. With him ended the attempt to stabilise reaction. The country became a prey to militarism, the product of the tendency of decentralisation which had brought down the monarchy. Yuan Shih-kai's failure to restore monarchy, however, did riot help the Republic. It also disappeared in the holocaust of death and destruction which followed the abortive bourgeois revolution. A Republic, established by the monarch, could be born only to die. It did die, to be resurrected as a reality only by the efforts of the revolutionary masses, which alone could free it from the damaging alliance with reaction—an alliance contracted by the bourgeoisie, and which killed the Republic before it was born.

Notes

.1. *Edict of Abdication,* February 12,1912.

2. *Second Edict of Abdication,* February 12, 1912.

3. A pension of four million dollars was granted to the Emperor after his abdication. He continued to reside in the luxurious palaces which remained his private property. The imperial household with its numerous retinue was to be maintained from the Exchequer of the Republican State.

The extensive private domains of the Emperor and the ruling dynasty were not touched : on the contrary, the Republic guaranteed their inviolability. The imperial guards were retained, the Republican Government, paying for their maintenance. Members of the royal dynasty and the nobility retained their titles and properties under the protection of the Republican Government. *(Third Edict cf Abdication,* February 12, 1912, countersigned by the members of the Republican Government under Yuan Shih-kai).

4. *The Constitution of Nineteen Articles,* calling for a limited monarchy, had been endorsed by all the Northern Generals.

5. But the Republican Government cannot be organised by any authority conferred by the Ching Emperor." (Sun Yat-sen's telegram to Yuan Shih-kai, February 14, 1912).

6. The Wanchus abdicated on February 12, Sun-Yat-sen resigned on February 14.

7. Sun Yat-sen's letter of resignation, addressed to the revolutionary Convention.

8. Interview with the Correspondent of the London *Times,* November 20, 1911.

9. The followers of Sun Yat-sen themselves now disclose the truth of the situation. They testify that the Provisional President resigned "under the pressure of his right wing, but really against his better judgement". —Tang Liang-li, "The Foundations of Modern China".

10. Report of the British Minister at Peking, Sir J. Jordan, October 16, 1911.

11. *"To Our Foreign Friends"*—A Manifesto of the Nanking Provisional Government, issued on November 17. 1911.

12. Louis Blanc, "History of the French Revolution".

13. "The Cabinet has presented Bs a memorial from Tang Shao-yi. According to that memorial, the representative of the People's Army (that is, the revolutionaries), Uu Ting-fang, steadfastly maintains that the mind of the people is in favour of the establishment of a Republican form of government as its ideal. Since the trouble at Wuchang, we have fulfilled the desires of the people, having accepted the Nineteen Articles of the Constitution, and sworn before the spirit of our ancestors to rule in accordance with these Articles. There is still dispute on political matters. Therefore, it is advisable to call a Provisional National Convention, and leave the issue for the Convention to decide."—*Imperial Edict,* December 28, 1911.

14. Putnam Weale, "The Flight for the Republic of China".

CHAPTER X

SUN YAT-SEN AND HIS THREE PRINCIPLES

"As the Confucian classics became the unwritten Constitution of Imperial China, so will modern China be politically and socially based on the teachings of Dr. Sun Yat-sen .... His social and political philosophy, with all their apparent contradictions, is now the political Bible of modern China."[1] An examination of the Sun Min Chui—"Three People's Principles"—therefore is an important part of the study of the Chinese Revolution.

It is, however, a bold statement that the social and political views of Sun Yat-sen are universally accepted in China. Denial of the fact of class struggle is inherent in those principles. According to Sun Yat-sen, the ancient culture of China obviated all social antagonism. The peasantry together with the urban toiling masses constitute more than eighty per cent of the population of modern China. This majority is subjected to all sorts of economic exploitation and social oppression, its very existence, therefore, represents the repudiation of a fundamental principle of the doctrine of Sun Yat-sen. The Communist Party of China was expelled from the Kuo Min Tang on the ground that it did not faithfully abide by the teachings of Sun Yat-sen. At the time of its expulsion, the Communist Party commanded the confidence of millions throughout the country. The Kuo Min Tang began its fierce attack on the revolutionary labour and peasant movement with the pretext of saving Sun Yat-senism. That evidently was an admission that the cult was not acceptable to the majority of the nation. The tremendous mass movement, which has been sweeping the country for a decade and more, draws its strength from the revolt of the exploited peasantry against the antiquated system of feudal-patriarchal landownersbip.

On the other hand, the upper strata of the bourgeoisie accepted

the views of Sun Yat-sen with reservation. A considerable section of that class never joined the Kuo Min Tang; another betrayed it in every revolutionary crisis. In the stormy days of 1927, the Kuo Min Tang split in consequence of a fierce controversy over the interpretation of the teachings of its founder. Even now those who consider themselves to be the most faithful followers of Sun Yat-sen, are *persona non-grata* with the Nationalist Government of Nanking, which also claims to be acting according to the teachings of the self-same master. Elimination from the effective leadership of the Kuo Min Tang of many a close collaborator and follower[2] of Sun Yat-sen provas that the bourgeoisie have rejected the doctrines of Sun Yat-sen. His three principles constitute the quintessence of his thories. They represent the ideology of the petit-bourgeoisie.

The nature of Sun Yat-sen's ideology was very largely determined by the social origin. As a small landonwer, his family was closely connected with the feudal-patriarchal structure of the Chinese society. In addition to the basic occupation, his father took to tailoring as a subsidiary trade.[3] Thus, Sun Yat-sen's youth was passed in the atmosphere of a mingling of the pre-capitalist and capitalist relations. That atmosphere, so typical of contemporary Chinese social conditions, left an indelible^impression upon his mind; and the views of reform he subsequently expounded were heavily influenced by the impressions of his youth.

The path of capitalist development blazed by his father was pursued with great success by his elder brother who emigrated to the Hawaiian Islands and got rich by trading. He increased his fortune still more by trafficking in human labour. He imported to Hawai Chinese labourers "obtaining his reward from the bounty of hundred dollars per head paid by the King of Hawai."[4] While still very young, Sun Yat-sen was taken to Honolulu by his prosperous brother. There he fell under American influence. Previously, at home, he had begun to resent that a foreign dynasty should rule China; but in Hawai he found the foreign rule to be beneficial for the natives. He was very much impressed by the law and order established there by American Imperialism. The father of Chinese nationalism was on the point of becoming an admirer of foreign Imperialism. But he was

saved because his faith in the superiority of the Confucian culture remained unshaken. Later on, Sun Yat-sen went to Hongkong for studying medicine. There he came under the influence of Christianity, and developed a great admiration for English Liberalism which superficially coloured his political views for the entire life. In the realm of Chinese thought his preference was clearly for the Confucianism of the Mandarins. The Taoism of the plebeians he detested. He accepted the ruling class interpretation of Chinese culture, and on that foundation constructed his ideological system.

Until very late in his life social questions did not bother Sun Yat-sen. Even then he touched them only superfically. Though born and brought up in the midst of revolting social conditions, he began his political career with a political object which had no direct bearing upon the realities of the situation. His own family was a victim of the inequities of a decayed social system. For all practical purposes, the ancestral land had ceased to belong to them. Nevertheless, they were held responsible for collection of tax on that land.[5] Sun's hatred for the Manchus was most probably caused by that injustice done to his family.

Sun Yat-sen began his political career as a conspirator. No influence of the Taiping Revolt can be traced in his youthful activities. He inherited from it only the hatred for the Manchus, but failed to appreciate the great social significance of that upheaval. In spite of the fact that grievous social evils cried out all around for remedy, and discontent with unbearable conditions was rife among the masses, Sun Yat-sen was hard put to it to find a political platform for his ambitious struggle to overthrow the Manchus. Isolated from the masses, he searched for a way out of the dilemma in the wilderness of mental abstraction. Ground down by the rude realities of daily life, the masses could be mobilised in a political movement only if it had a direct bearing upon their immediate surroundings. They could not be expected to join the wild-goose-chase of a fight against a dynasty living somewhere at a very great distance. But a political movement involving the masses was conditional upon a revolutionary social outlook, which Sun Yat-sen did not possess until the late years of his political career. His earlier activities remained limited to small groups of middle-class youths hatching romantic schemes for armed uprisings.

So utterly devoid of any perspective were those early activities

that, once asked by his associates what did he propose to set up in the place of the Thorne, Sun found it very difficult to give a clear answer. The substitute offered by him, after much cogitation, was "reverence for the law alone".[6] It was hopeless to inspire a movement with such an abstract ideal. The confusion about his political ideal was due to the fact that Sun Yat-sen was still far from identifying the monarchy with the entire established order of feudal-patriarchal despotism. He would have Law enthroned in the place of the Manchu monarch; but the vital question was, what was that new political deity? One might assume that Sun's "reverence for law" represented an instinctive approach to Montesquieu's "L'Esprit de Loi". But the assumption would be rather far-fetched. Because, he did not specify that the new political godhead of his choice was to be a new system of law, established by a revolution, for governing a new system of social relations. He could not do so unless he recognised the necessity of disrupting the established social order. There is no evidence that, at that time, he had any such revolutionary perspective. His alternative, therefore, was reverence for the existing law. But the monarchy could not be seriously threatened if the laws holding it up should be reverentially observed. The political ideal of young Sun Yat-sen was not only impractical but positively reactionary.

With no revolutionary social outlook, he groped in the darkness of an intellectual confusion until he tumbled upon making the so-called "Declaration of Independence". The Declaration was *"Tien Ming Wu Chang"*—"Divine Right does not last for ever". Those, indeed, were words with grave implication. They might indicate an approach towards a democratic ideology. But the Declaration was still only negative. Divine Right was not yet confronted with the right of the people. The principle of Divine Right cannot be effectively contested except by attacking the entire social system constituting the basis of monarch claiming that right. Because of his failure to see that a modern China could not be built without making a clean sweep of the old. Sun Yat-sen never stood firmly on the ground of revolutionary democracy. He never preached the sovereignty of the people as against the sovereignty of the Crown. He tried to organise revolt against the Manchu monarchy. But he never preached "the sacred right of revolt" of the people against the established socio-political system of oppression and exploitation. Following in the footsteps of Confucius, he endeavoured to find a formula of com-

promise between the social institutions of ancient China and the political conquests of mc-dern democracy. That formula is set forth in his Three Principles, which were not formulated in a coherent form until 1924. Sun Yat-sen was not a revolutionary; he was a reformer, and even as such he lacked an inspiring vision, and found his ideals in the traditions of the past.

The three principles are popularly stated as Nationality, Democracy and Socialism. Thanks to the fact that Sun Yat-sen never produced a theoretical treatise elaborating coherently his views on social and political questions, all kinds of interpretations have been placed upon the three principles. He himself interpreted them differ-rently in different periods of his life. It is claimed by his disciples that he formulated his three principles already in the earlier years of the century. They maintain that, on his first visit to Europe, he was not favourably impressed by the working of the democratic govern-ments. After having studied them, he is believed to have come "to the conclusion that a representative government alone would not solve the Chinese problem".[7] From that belief, it is deduced that his principles are more revolutionary than political democracy. The fact, however, is that until the revolution of 1911 and even lor years afterwards, Sun Yat-sen's political ideas were hardly more radical than formal parliamentarism. Indeed, he never fully accepted even the political principles of bourgeois democracy. Admiring commentators usually read more in the teachings of the master than the latter really meant. Therefore, they claim that the starting point of the three principles was realisation of the inadequacy of political democracy. But a critical examination of principles shows that, instead of being an advance upon bourgeois democracy, they do not go even as far as that.

The ideologists of the *big* bourgeoisie, Kang Yu-wei and Liang Chih-chao, were great scholars. In contrast to them, Sun Yat-sen was remarkably sterile in original thought. He borrowed his ideas either from the philosophers of ancient China, or from the liberal political thinkers of the West. One need not be ashamed of learning from others; but Sun Yat-sen did not learn from great thinkers in order to improve upon their teachings. As a matter of fact, he did not think; he only schemed. He has been characterised as a dreamer. The more correct characterisation, however, would be a schemer. He was not an ideologist of social reconstruction or even political reform H; was a constitutional draftsman. Therefore, he failed to pro-

vide the movement with a comprehensive programme.

Not only did he ignore the burning social questions agitating the growing forces of revolution; his politics completely lacked the background of a theoretical understanding. Never in his life did he evolve a political theory out of the negative formula he had tumbled upon in his youth—"Divine Right does not last for ever". His inability to find new principles of government to replace the traditional was the cause of his submission to the reactionary Yuan Shih-kai in the revolutionary crisis of 1911. In that crisis, he made a feeble protest, but could not resist the temptation that the Republic should also inherit the Divine Right. An effective resistance could be put only by those advocating the sovereignty of the people, and teaching the sacred right of revolt for asserting that sovereignty.

Even when he became the Provisional President of the Republic, Sun Yat-sen did not fully subscribe to the principles of bourgeois democracy. He believed in paternalism, professed traditionally by absolute monarchs claiming to rule on Divine Right. The oath of the Provincial President was "to plan and beget blessing for the people, and to perform duty in the interest of the public",[8] The spirit of Confucian paternalism, the basic principle of the patriarchal Chinese State for centuries, was smuggled into the Republican Constitution. The head of the Republican State would "plan and beget the blessing for the people". From whom did he get his benevolent mission? He would perform his duty in the interest of the public. But what were those interests? Who should define them? In the absence of any specification to the contrary, the mission is supposed to be derived from the moral sense of the new ruler who presumed to be the best judge of what was good and what was bad for the people. That conception of government was not very different from the hypothesis of Divine Right, and was very far behind even bourgeois democracy.

Sun Yat-sen was still haunted by the spirit of Confucian paternalism, even when at last he definitely formulated his principles and wrote the Constitution of the Kuo Min Tang. Regarding the sovereignty of the people as an abstract conception, he set it aside in practice. The future government of the country, envisaged by him, was to be in charge of men specially qualified for the task. The sovereignty would be transferred to the people in some remote future, after they had been politically educated by their self-appointed guar-

dians. Trusteeship, preparatory to the transfer of political power to the people, is the corner-stone of the neo-Confucian State of Sun Yat-sen. The doctrine of trusteeship is a complete negation of the theory of bourgeois democracy, according to which the sovereign right of the people is inalienable Sun Yat-sen visualised sovereign right as a distant goal to be attained by the people after having qualified themselves for the honour and responsibility under the tutelage of benevolent despots. That being the case, the birth of the Republic by the grace of the monarch was not repugnant to Sun Yat-sen's theory of sovereignty. The monarch also admitted that he had exercised the sovereign right as a trust; on abdicating, he did not surrender the right of sovereignty to the people; he only handed the trust over to others equally worthy, ia his opinion. The paternalist republicans stepped into thj sho;s of the monarch as the custodians of the sovereign right theoretically belonging to the people; but the latter would be admitted in the Kingdom of Heaven only after they had been taught by the benevolent custodians how to behave there.

Posthumously, his admirers assert that Sun Yat-sen began to evolve his Three Principles as an improvement upon Western political democracy early in the opening years of the century But as the provisional President of the Republic in 1911 he was without any political principle. Called to that exalted office, he was pathetically incapable of giving a lead to the country. Having until then been exclusively engaged in conspirative activities with the object of smuggling arms and raising money for purchasing them as well as some officers in the army, Sun Yat-sen had neither time nor aptitude to formulate any political programme. He seems to have learned nothing from the experience of the two preceding stages of the Democratic Revolution in China. He had inherited only contempt for "the longhaired rebels",[9] and completely failed to understand the social significance of the Boxer Revolt. On the other hand, he had little connection with the Reform Movement It was later on asserted that he had disagreed with the moderatism of Kang Yu-wei and his followers. But there is no evidence of Sun Yat-sen ever fighting ideologically the theories of constitutional monarchy advocated by them. He might have disagreed with them but was not able to put up a revolutionary programme as against their reformism. As a matter of fact, when great original thinkers like Kang Yu-wei and Liang Chih-chao were battering down the empty traditions of

Confucianism, Sun Yat-sen retained his faith in those antiquated social theories. He always maintained the opinion that modern political democracy could be introduced in China only in so far as it was adaptable to the Confucian conception of State. Not only did he retain this view until the last days of his life, but actually elaborated it as late as 1924 when he gave the final shape to his Three Principles.

If Sun Yat-sen really disagreed with Kang Yu-wei's theories of constitutional monarchy, he certainly did not preach revolutionary Jacobinism as against Chinese Girondism. On the contrary, Kang Yu-wei and his followers raised vital social questions and preached an objectively revolutionary ideology, while they demanded radical social reforms. Sun Yet-sen, on his part, did not connect political radicalism with social problems. His politics hung in the air. The Republic was born only to die. and the passing of the Manchus did not improve the situation of the country in the least.

Sun Yat-sen began his political activities with the slogan: "Down with the Manchus!" It is said that in the Tokyo Conference of 1905 which founded the Tang Meng Hui, Sun Yat-sen proposed a sort of a political programme to supplement the original slogan. The programme included the following demands: I. Overthrow of the Manchus; 2. Establishment of a Democratic Republic on the American model; 3 Redistribution of land through the nationalisation of unearned increments; and 4. Maintenance of friendly relations with all foreign Powers, especially*Japan.[10] The second and third items were positive demands which could serve as the basis for a comprehensive treatment of political and social conditions in an elaborated political programme. But they were opposed by the conference and dropped by the sponsor. The conference was a gathering of political conspirators hailing exclusively from the urban petit-bourgeoisie. The attitude towards the semblance of a social and political programme revealed that the supporters of Sun Yat-sen did not want to commit themselves to a democratic government in the modern sense. They wanted the hated Manchus to go, but were not sure that monarchy as an institution could altogether be dispensed with. Nor were they willing to depose Confucius for Abraham Lincoln, whose doctrine of government "of the people, for the people and by people" was then the political *summum bonum* for Sun Yat-sen. Moreover, the amateurish reference to the agrarian question was something altogether strange to them. They failed to see what conceivable relation land

could have with the overthrow of the Manchus. They were all directly or indirectly connected with the prevailing system of landholding, which was not disadvantageous even for the smallest non-cultivating rent-receiver.

It is difficult to say whether Sun Yat-sen raised the agrarian question earnestly, or for simply impressing the conference with something new-fangled he had picked up in his travels abroad. In view of the fact that he dropped the matter so easily and put it aside for nearly twenty years, it can scarcely be believed that he was earnestly approaching the agrarian question. Had it been the case, he should have reverted to it at least when he became the head of the Republic. But the fact is that until the last years of his political career he was never known to have made a serious study of this all-important question of the political movement in China; and even then he advocated only a patchwork. Presumably, while visiting America, he had made a superficial acquaintance with the single-tax theory of Henry George. The nationalisation of land-rent proposed by Henry George had a remarkable resemblance with the system of land-tax in China. That must have greatly impressed Sun Yat-sen. Very probably, he did not fully understand the implication of the reform he fathered. In any case, the theory of single-tax occupied a large place in the third principle which is unwarrentedly dubbed as "Socialism." Through paternalist redistribution of land, Sun Yat-sen hoped to resurrect the disrupted patriarchal family.

If it is true that Sun Yat-sen had worked out his principles during the years preceding the revolution of 1911, he certainly forgot them, or quietly set them aside, when he became the Provisional President of the Republic. On assuming that exalted position, he issued a proclamation which contained the programme of the new Government. The historic document expressed satisfaction at the "speedy success of the revolution unprecedented in history", and announced the task of the Republic to be to "realise unity of territories, unity of races,[11] unity of finance, unity of military administration; and to establish friendly relations with foreign Powers",[1]- None of the principles, possibly except the first— of nationalism, based upon racial unity—could be traced in that declaration of the Provisional President, which indeed was a declaration of political bankruptcy.

A combination of circumstances—split in the camp of reaction,

operation of the forces of decentralisation, and anxiety of the big bourgeoisie to save the monarchy—placed the leader of petit-bourgeois radicalism at the head of the Republic. In that exalted position, he was faced with social and economic problems bristling with difficulties, problems which he had never visualised in his life. He had hoped that everything would happen according to his mechanical scheme as soon as a military *coup d'etat* removed the Manchus from the Throne. That condition was fulfilled, but only to reveal the great magnitude of problems to be boldly faced and resolutely solved, if the Republic was to be a reality, if a democratic State was to be established in the place of the old autocratic regime. Even then the petit-bourgeoisie failed to grasp the vastness of the task of revolution. Their spokesman became the head of the Republic. But entirely oblivious of the basic social and political problems demanding a revolutionary solution, he indulged only in vague generalities. No wonder that he was presently obliged to make room for a stronger man—the nominee of the abdicating monarch. The debacle of the Tang Meng-hui, and the disgraceful abdication of its leader in favour of Yuan Shih-kai in tlie revolutionary crisis of 1911 revealed the shallowness of the movement. The rise of the still-born Republic did not mark the triumph of a revolution. It was brought into being by the manoeuvre of the cleverer reactionaries as the last effort to preserve a decayed and disintegrating socio-political system in a new guise. The movement was intellectually sterile, politically naive, theoretically bankrupt, and ideologically reactionary. Having roots in none of the principal classes of society, it was utterly devoid of a social outlook.

Already during the Taiping Revolt, it had become evident that the decayed monarchy was not the main obstacle to the historically necessary revolution. The rise of modern China was no longer hindered primarily by the native monarchy, but by foreign Imperialism. The decisive battle for the freedom of the Chinese people had to be fought out with the latter. The Boxer Uprising made this all-important lesson of the Taiping Revolt still more evident. The bourgeoisie, however, failed to learn the lesson even when it was written all across the country with the blood of the masses. On the contrary, they took foreign Imperialism for their friend. In their struggle against native reaction, they sought an alliance with foreign Imperialism. That was an illusion. The result of that illusion was the

tragedy of the Reform Movement and the abortion of the revolution of 1911. Being still less realistic than their big brothers, the petit-bourgeoisie naively ran after a shadow, completely ignoring the vital issues of the situation. They believed that the removal of the Manchus would mean restoration of the Old Sage whose threadbare mantle of morality, mended with a few stitches of modern political institutions, would tolerably bedeck the withering body of China. The big bourgeoisie wanted to borrow revolutionary ideas from the West- But they were realistic enough to behold the danger of imperialist penetration. Even such a highly conservative pioneer of the modern Chinese bourgeoisie as Chang Chin-lung was opposed to the free admission of foreign capital. Ever since the middle of the last century, the real enemy of the developing revolution in China was not the effete native monarchy. That place of power was occupied by foreign Imperialism. But the real relation of forces was not understood by the superficial political radicalism of the petit-bourgeoisie, devoid of a revolutionary social orientation. In their quixotic fight against the shadow of the decayed monarchy, the petit-bourgeoisie not only failed to see the real enemy, but lovingly invited it as the saviour of China.

Sun Yat-sen and his followers had organised a movement with the simple cry, "Down with the Manchus!". They had declared a war to the knife against a sinister shadow, and were left in utter bewilderment as soon as that phantom disappeared. The passing of the Manchus left them without a definite object, without a clear perspective. The ugly realities of the situation should have been noticed by them at that juncture. That was the opportunity for Sun Yat-sen to formulate a programme of real radicalism. But he was unable to do so. The old shadow was replaced by a new reality. Yuan Shih-kai took the place of the Son of Heaven, and again gave petit-bourgeois radicalism a futile political occupation. By the grace of the arch-reactionary nominee of the passing Manchus, Sun Yat-sen was relieved of the difficult task of leading a revolution as the head of the Republic. He reverted to his favourite pastime-conspiracy with the object of overthrowing something which he cannot substitute for the better. There followed the dreary story of the abortive Second Revolution and "Punish Yuan Expedition". The real power behind the monarchist President of the Republic was foreign Imperialism. But Sun Yat -sen still failed to appreciate the role of that sinister

power. While seeking to overthrow its protege, Sun Yat-sen was extremely solicitous to be in the good books of foreign Imperialism, and even proposed to reconstruct China with the aid of its worst enemy.

Having failed to evolve any radical social theory, to formulate a definite political programme, and to lead the revolution when he was called upon to do so, Sun Yat-sen gave free reins to his imagination. His only coherent literary work was a book entitled "International Development of China". It was a mechanical scheme of fantastic dimensions. Nothing testifies more eloquently to his utter inability for grasping the problems of China. The country was to be economically developed with the aid of foreign capital! The implication of his scheme was to deliver the country, body and soul, to the tender mercies of international Imperialism which, for more than half a century, had plundered, pillaged and partitioned it. Presumably, Sun Yat-sen did not know what he was talking about, so staggering were the contradictions and fallacies of his scheme. If even realised, it would unceremoniously bury the ghost of Father Confucius. For, China would become a highly industrialised capitalist country, no hot-house in which the withering plant of the patriarchal family could possibly be preserved. Sun Yat-sen thirsted for the new wine of Capitalism; but it must be put into the old bottle of the Confueian society which he idealised. The result of that proposed operation could be easily imagined. But the prolific schemer had no imagination.

Sun Yat-sen began his quarrel with the Manchus because they could not defend the country against foreign aggression. Now he proposed to give gratuitously to the foreigners incomparably much more than the Manchus conceded under duress. That remarkable book was written during the great imperialist world war. Its English rendering was published as late as in 1921. He could not possibly have hatched that suicidal scheme if his principles were older. The most important of his principles is nationalism. It had a revolutionary significance, because it implied and called for the overthrow of foreign Imperialism. Had he been inspired only with the ideal of revolutionary nationalism, he could not possibly produce the fantastic scheme of developing China with the aid of foreign capital. The principle of nationalism and the scheme of Sun Yat-sen were completely irreconcilable. But his petit-bourgeois followers, who

would canonise him as the Saint of modern China to be enshrined by the side of the Old Sage, are equally incorrigible. In his very contradiction, they find the greatness of their hero. Reluctant to admit that the bankrupt petit-bourgeois political radicalism of Sun Yat-sen could play a revolutionary role only when it came under the influence of the masses, his uncritical admirers make themselves ridiculous by reversing the sequence of historical events. They maintain that the Chinese Revolution is a child of Sun Yat-sen; that but for him it would never have been. The historical fact, however, is that the revolution would certainly never have been, if Sun Yat-sen could kill it by his signal failure to lead it in the earlier stages of his political career. A critical interpretation of the history of the Chinese nationalist movement reveals the fact that Sun Yat-sen became a half-hearted revolutionary when a quarter of a century of failures forced him to turn to the masses and establish an alliance with the working class. Under the pressure of the revolutionary masses, he discarded, rather laid aside, some of his old reactionary ideas and made a praiseworthy effort to come out of the dreary wilderness of illusion in which he had wasted the best part of his life.

Before taking up the examination of the three principles, as formulated in 1924, some attention should be given to Sun Yat-sen's scheme for the "international development of China". The basic idea was to promote a rapid industrial development of the country with the aid of foreign capital. For our present purpose it is not necessary here to discuss the technical aspects of this scheme. It is the political implication of the scheme which is of supreme importance for our purpose, and as such deserves attention. It throws a flood of light upon the social significance of Sun Yat-senism.

The book was written in 1918, expressedly with the object "to assist the readjustment of post-bellum industries." The economic fabric of the capitalist world had been shattered by the war. Sun Yat-sen proposed a recipe which would cure the evils of the world. He cordially invited world capitalism to exploit the untouched natural resources and the vast labour power of China as the way out of the impasse. He proposed extensive construction of railways, roads, harbour, power stations, canals, iron and steel works, development of min es and agriculture, reforestation of Central and North China and co lonisation of the desert territories. That gigantic plan was

to be carried out not only by foreign capital, but under the supervision of foreign experts. Either Sun Yat-sen did not understand what he was talking about, or he was advocating the colonisation of his country by international finance. The scheme was conceived evidently with no sense of the realities. At that time, the Imperialist Powers, with the exception of America, were not in a position to provide the vast amount of capital necessary for the realisation of the scheme. Then, should the required capital be available, and those possessing it be willing to invest it in China, it would not be employed as Sun Yat-sen desired. He should have known from the bitter experience of his own country that philanthropy did not enter into the philosophy of Capitalism except as a means of exploitation. By making that fantastic scheme, Sun Yat-sen once again demonstrated his inability to understand the nature of Imperialism.

One must have been astoundingly naive to expect that international finance, with powerful imperialist governments behind it, would undertake to carry on a gigantic revolution in China under the command of a fictitious native authority. The provision that the proposed industrial development of China with foreign capital should take place under the supervision of the government of the country was the only point which distinguished the scheme from a deed of sale of the country to international finance. But at that time, the Government of China was but a fiction; therefore, the realisation of the scheme would mean colonisation of the country.

The scheme represented an admission by the Chinese bourgeoisie of their failure to carry through the social revolution, only out of which the modern China of their dream could arise. The Manchus had disappeared. But the feudal-patriarchal system of social relations had still to be abolished. The bourgeoisie proved unequal to that revolutionary task. The effort to set up a Republican State, while pre-capitalist social conditions still remained in force, was bound to end in a fiasco. The country was falling into ruins even more rapidly in the conditions of chaos, anarchy and civil war that followed the fall of the Manchus. Foreign Imperialism alone made profit out of that tragic situation, ft tightened its grip on the economic life of the country thereby rendering the task of its reconstruction more baffling. The native bourgeoisie stood naked in their pathetic impotence. A section of them thrived on the crumbs from the imperialist table, and looked hopelessly on the situation. The less fortunate

among them tried to hide their imbecility in a pompous illusion. They hoped, while there was absolutely no warrant for such hope, that foreign Imperialism would do for them what they themselves had so signally failed to do. They declared their readiness "to welcome the development of our country's resources, provided that it can be kept out of Mandarin corruption and ensure the mutual benefit of China and of the countries co-operating with her."[13] They had failed to fight the Mandarins effectively. In alliance with Imperialism, the Mandarins had blocked all progress during more than half a century. Now the heroes of an abortive revolution appealed to foreign Imperialism to bestow upon China the blessings of a bourgeois revolution.

Having failed disgracefully to create a modern democratic State, Sun Yat-sen produced a fantastic scheme "for the consolidation of all the national industries of China into one gigantic trust, owned by the Chinese people and financed by international capital for the good of the world in general and the Chinese people in particular."[14] The all-important question of political power was forgotten. How were the Chinese people to exercise the ownership of the dreamland, when they did not possess a central organ of power? The thorny question was begged. The petit-bourgeoisie, with all their superficial political radicalism, did not have the courage to attack the feudal-patriarchal reaction in order to create the initial condition for the establishment of a democratic State and the economic reconstruction of the country. Like unrepentant sinners, they now proposed to sell the country to foreign Imperialism. The result of Sun Yat-sen's scheme, if ever realised, could not be anything else. The control of the Powers behind the international finance so cordially invited would be a stern reality; on the other hand, in the absence of effective political power, the ownership of the Chinese people could not be anything but a fiction. "The International Development of China," desired by Sun Yat-sen, would unavoidably mean the victory of the reality of absolute control by international finance over the fiction of national ownership. It would mean complete colonisation of China. Yet the followers of Sun Yat-sen interpreted the scheme as a plan to establish Socialism in China with the help of international capital.[15] That was an amazing interpretation, ft was worse than illusion.

The scheme was submitted to the Versailles Peace Conference accompanied by the naive suggestion that a half of the sum spent in a

day during the war be applied for its execution. It was further proposed that "the war machinery, organisational skill and constructive forces of the Western nations" could be profitably employed for modernising China. The contemptuous treatment received by the Chinese delegation at Versailles was a rude shock to Sun Yat-sen. He had pinned his faith on Wilsonian idealism. He was painfully disillusioned about it. China got absolutely nothing for having aided the crusade against the Kaiser. The victorious Powers flatly refused to consider the suggestion that the principles professed by them might possibly be applied to China. On the contrary, still further encroachments were made upon her sovereignty by the cession of the entire province of Shantung to Japan. Rude realities mocked at the scheme of modernising China with the help of the "democractic nations of the West." China must modernise herself; the forces necessary for the purpose must grow out of her own social organism. The defeat in the struggle with native reaction and the illusion about the role of foreign Imperialism proved that the bourgeoisie were not able to build a new China out of the ruins of the old. But the long overdue bourgeois democratic revolution must be carried through even on the default of the bourgeoisie.

When the politics of the bourgeoisie ended in a blind alley, and the perspective before Chinese nation appeared to be hopeless, the sanguine voice of the rising working class made itself heard. In December, 1918, a professor of the Peking University, Chen Tu-hsiu began the publication of the *Weekly Review* which heralded the rise of the proletariat to take the place abdicated so helplessly by the bourgeoisie. The journal, edited by a Marxist intellectual, soon became the focus of "the advanced revolutionary opinion in the country."[16] For years Chen Tu-hsiu had been carrying on a single-handed struggle against the reactionary social outlook of the nationalist bourgeoisie. He told the younger generation that China must forget her Confucian tradition if she wanted to have a clear vision of her future. For that heresy he had to leave his position in the Peking University which was the source of spiritual inspiration for the modern Chinese bourgeoisie. But he had acquired a great influence upon the younger generation. He came to be the connecting link between the radical petit-bourgeoisie and the new social force entering the political field, namely, the working class. He boldly held up the light of Marxism so that things could be seen in their proper

perspective. "During the period of agitation which followed China's refusal to sign the Versailles Treaty, hundreds of periodicals modelled after the one sheet of the *Weekly Review* were published by the students' organisations in various provincial centres."[17] The ideology of the imminent bourgeois democratic revolution was at last crystallising under the guidance of those inspired with the philosophy of Marxism. The petit-bourgeoisie were at last finding their way towards the revolution under the pressure of the rising proletariat.

The year 1919 marked the beginning of a new phase in the history of the Chinese revolution. The protest against the Versailles Treaty, first made by the students of the Peking University, still under the influence of the revolutionary propaganda of Chen Tu-hsiu, developed into a gigantic mass movement spreading throughout the country. In that movement, students were joined by the workers and the mighty echo of the Boxer Uprising was heard in the thunderous cry: "Down with Imperialism!" At last the revolution found the right way. Things were seen in their proper places. China would become a modern nation not with the assistance and under the guidance of international finance, but by liberating herself from the tentacles of foreign Imperialism. That could be done only through a revolutionary fight on two fronts. Side by side with foreign Imperialism, its allies and instruments inside the country must also be destroyed.

The heroism of the Taipings had not been in vain; the martyrdom of the Boxers was not to be forgotten. After the miscarriage of the Reform Movement and the abortion of the revolution of 1911, the Chinese people came to their revolutionary heritage. The mass movement with anti-imperialist slogans spread like wilde-fire throughout the country. It was under the pressure of that new force that Sun Yat-sen formulated his Three Principles as the programme of the Chinese National Revolution. Fond hopes, entertained throughout his futile political career, so cruelly shattered, Sun Yat-sen at last changed his views about Imperialism. Pocketing quietly his fantastic scheme of modernising China with the aid of international finance, he spoke bitterly about "the economic designs" of foreign Powers against China, and he declared that "economic oppression is more severe than Imperialism or political oppression."[18] Still unable to understand correctly the nature and role of Imperialism, he was, however, changing his attitute towards it In 1912 he had believed that

the "democratic nations of the West" sympathised with the Republican movement in China. He held on to that ill-conceived and misplaced belief until it became totally untenable. Finally, the logic of events showed that a democratic mass movement alone could make a reality of the Republic, and that popular force could not develop except as an anti-imperialist movement.

In 1924 Sun Yat-sen delivered a series of lectures at Canton. On that occasion, he formulated his Three Principles for the first time. He maintained that in China the slogans of the classical bourgeois revolution—liberty, equality and fraternity—should be replaced by "Min-tsu, Min-chuan and Min-sheng." The English rendering of these slogans of Sun Yat-sen is "People's Nationalism, People's Sovereignty and People's Livelihood." So, contrary to the propagandist interpretation, the Three People's Principles do not correspond with nationalism, democracy and socialism, if these latter terms are to be understood in their generally accepted meanings. The Three Principles represent Sun Yat-sen's views on these latter subjects. In his book "San Min Chu-I" he states what, according to him, is a nation, what true democratic government, and how the welfare of the people can be best achieved. On the first two subjects, his ideas are a mixture of certain features of modern bourgeois democracy and the traditions of ancient China. The result is self-contradictory theories which are essentially reactionary. On the third subject, Sun Yat-sen does not have anything new to say. He simply repeats the worn-out principles of bourgeois liberalism. Yet this principle has been interpreted as Socialism!

By nationalism Sun Yat-sen meant unification of the country, including Mongolia, Tibet and Turkestan, under a strong centralised government. And he was of the opinion that the modern Chinese nation should be built on the basis of the still existing family and clan organisation. He realised that militarism, extra-territorial rights enjoyed by the foreigners, unequal treaties dictated by Imperialist Powers, and concessions given to foreigners were obstacles to national unity. Therefore, his principle of nationalism involved a struggle for the removal of those obstacles. Sun Yat-sen considered two things to be essential for the salvation of the Chinese people. The first was realisation of the danger of their position, and the second was "consolidation of the deep-rooted sentiment prevailing in the family and clan into a powerful national spirit." The etymological meaning of

the Chinese term Min-tsu is not "People's Nationalism," but *"People's Clanisrn."*

The second principle, "People's Sovereignty", begins with a criticism of political democracy as obtaining in the capitalist countries of the West and also of the philosophical radicalism of the bourgeoisie. According to Sun Yat-sen, genuine democracy, particularly applicable to China, was to be found in the political doctrines of Confucius. China should not blindly imitate the West. Science and technique she must learn from the latter; but as regards politics, she should take only as much as could be fitted into her ancient traditions. He maintained that the doctrine of popular sovereignty was not a new thing in China: the Confucian State had always been based on a democratic principle. The most important question was, how could the people exercise the sovereign right? Sun Yat-sen's reply to this question was a plan of an elaborate machinery of government, en the model of that existing in ancient China. The function of the machinery was to educate the people. The government was to be conducted by experts. It should have five departments—legislative, executive, judicial, examining and censorial. The old system of examination was meant to place the State machinery under the monopoly of the Confucian literati. It had been abolished by the reformist Emperor Kwang Hsue. According to Sun Yat-sen's scheme of a new government, it should be revived.

The "genuine democracy" of the neo-Confucian State would not mean immediate application of the principle of people's sovereignty. The advance towards that direction should be by stages. In the beginning, there will be the period of unification of the country by military action. The first principle of nationalism should be realised as the condition for the establishment of the people's sovereignty. That, however, should not take place even after the unification of the country. There will follow the period of tutelage in which the people will be educated about their political rights and duties. That will be a period of paternal dictatorship of the experts. Finally, political power will be transferred to the people. Since no limit is set to the preparatory period of tutelage, the fitness of the people to assume sovereignty will presumably be judged by the experts of the paternal dictatorship. Consequently, the principle of people's sovereignty is liable to remain an ideal never to be attained in practice.

Just as the second principle implies the rejection of political

democracy, the third principle—People's Livelihood-is meant rather to be a criticism of Socialism than a positive formula of social reconstruction. In elaborating his views concerning the third principle, Sun Yat-sen differed from Marx on the question of class struggle, and asserted that it could be avoided in China. The assertion was supported by an argument which is altogether irrelevant in a criticism of the Marxian theory. Sun Yat-sen maintained that the fundamental problem of social reconstruction in China was not distribution but production. The argument is irrelevant because, in Marxian economics, distribution is not regarded as independent of production. Production is the fundamental problem of economics. However, Sun Yat-sen held that in China capitalist methods of production should be introduced in order to quicken the economic development of the country; but he maintained that class struggle could be avoided by placing heavy industries under the control of the State. On the agrarian question, equal distribution of land should be realised through "the nationalisation of the increase of land values". The cryptic formula is nowhere elaborated. Taken on its face value, it only echoes the antiquated theory of the nineteenth century land reformers. Quite clearly, the third principle of Sun Yat-sen does not propose the abolition of private property in land. Therefore it is altogether unwarranted to read Socialism in it. As a matter of fact, while elaborating his alternative scheme of social reconstruction, Sun Yat-sen categorically ruled out Communism as not applicable to China. That was in 1924.

Inasmuch as any serious blow to Imperialism will hasten the downfall of capitalism, the nationalist movement in a semi-colonial country like China is intimately connected with the struggle for Socialism. Notwithstanding that objectively revolutionary significance of the movement headed by Sun Yat-sen, all his principles represented a decidedly reactionary social outlook. The reconstruction of China into a modern nation being a revolutionary task, it could not be accomplished without destroying all the factors, foreign as well as native, hindering such reconstruction. But even when he came to realise the necessity for the struggle against foreign Imperialism, Sun Yat-sen still remained under the influence of Chinese traditions and therefore incapable of organising an effective fight against the social forces of native reaction.

Politically, it was a great progress when at last he came to realise

that a modern free Chinese nation could not come into existence with the sympathy, sanction and support of foreign Imperialism. His social views, however, did not undergo a corresponding change. The programme of fight against militarism was conceived with as little understanding of its social character as was the case with the previous movement for the overthrow of the Manchus. Militarism was nothing but the ugly ghost of the Manchu monarchy. That bloody pest was bred in the pool of social stagnation which constituted the basis of the Manchu monarchy. Until that disease disappeared, the ugly symptom of militarism could not be possibly cured. Therefore, the programme of fight against militarism was bound to miscarry. The country could not be unified through a military dictatorship. It would be easy enough to set up a military dictatorship with nationalist pretensions: but the desired unification of the country would not happen. So long as social institutions providing a basis for the reactionary forces of disruption were not wiped out, centralisation of the country would remain a dream. On the oher hand, the existence and operation of those forces would be helpful to imperialist designs. The blow had to be dealt at the root of all evils. That was not intended by Sun Yat-sen.

His modern nation was to be reared precisely on those very social organisations which had hindered the growth of national unity, and whose decayed existence infected the whole body politic of the country. The signal failure of the Nanking Government, even with the discrediting patronage of imperialist Powers, to unify the country is the most damaging verdict against the principle of nationalism as propounded by Sun Yat-sen. One set of militarists has been eliminated; but a new set has come into existence in course of the process of eliminating the old. The monstrous hydra cannot be slain unless the blow is dealt at the source of its strength.

The modern nation is a comparatively new thing. Political nationhood is the specific feature of certain stage of social evolution. Only a country with a centralised State can be the home of a modern nation. Many factors go into the making of a nation. Unity of race, religion and language is a favourable condition : but it is not essential, The essential condition is economic unity. Development in that direction is an irresistible factor contributing to the growth of a people into a modern nation. A centralised modern national State is created mainly by the necessity of capitalist production and distribution. In the pre-capitalist mediaeval and antique ages, masses

of people were coalesced into political units, often very large. Those political organisations, however, were not national entities. They were Empires or Kingdoms. The difference between the imperial or monarchical States of the past and the modern national State lies in their respective social foundations. The former were based upon feudal relations—absolute subordination of the toiling masses to the landlords, and the allegiance of the latter to the Emperor or the King. The latter is the political superstructure of the capitalist social relation, the basic principle of which is the freedom of labour. Therefore, the rise of a modern national State pre-supposes not only the overthrow of mediaeval Empires or Kingdoms, but also the destruction of social relations on which the latter were based. The individual is the basic unit of the structure of the modem national State. The mediaeval Empires, on the contrary, were built upon the pillars of patriarchal clan-chiefs or feudal nobility. A modern nation is composed of individuals. But Sun Vat-sen's principle of nationalism does not admit of individualism. Therefore, it is reactionary.

Sun Yat- sen began with the admission that "in China, there have been family-ism and clanism, but no real nationalism."[19] He further admits that "the unity of the Chinese people has stopped short at the clan and has not extended to the nation."[20] But he considered those unfortunate phenomena to be the peculiar features of China, and proposed to build the future of the country precisely on the basis of what has been its misfortune in the past.

Family groups and clan organisations are not the peculiar features of China. Representing a certain stage of social evolution, they existed, in superficially varied forms, in every country, and were disruoted in consequence of the growth of newer instruments and higher modes of production. Family groups and clan organisations flourish in the backward conditions of production which are conducive to a self-sufficient local economy. Effective political centralisation is not possible under those conditions. Therefore, the existence of family groups and clan organisations, however useful they might have been in the past, is not compatible with the creation of a modern nation. Under the backward conditions of production, characterised by the existence of self-sufficient local economic units, extensive territories could be brought under an Emperor or a King receiving tributes from subsidiaries who were practically independent

in their respective domains. But an organic unity was not there. It was not possible. Political centralisation can take place only to meet the necessity of economic centralisation. The unification of a people into a modern nation, therefore, pre-supposes the disappearance of self-sufficient local economy and consequently of the social relations on which the latter is based.

But Sun Yat-sen proposed to develop nationalism out of the worthy sentiment of clanism. He did not mean that a modern Chinese nation should rise out of the ruins of the decayed clan-organisation of society. His proposition flagrantly contradicted the facts of the situation he had himself recognised. He fallaciously came to the conclusion that, "if the worthy clan sentiments could be expanded, we might develop nationalism out of clanism." It is an entirely different question whether the clan sentiment is worthy or not. The relevant question, however, is: Can the sentiment be expanded undar the present conditions of the country? If the answer is in the affirmative, then it is admitted that the conditions for a modern national State are not yet ripe in China. The situation, however, is not so unfortunate. The rise of the bourgeoisie with the object of overthrowing the Manchu monarchy, based upon the family and clan system, proved that Sun Yat-sen's proposition was reactionary, because it did not correspond with the objective requirements of the situation.

Whatever might have been his subjective inclination, Sun Yat-sen's whole life nevertheless was a negation of *his* principle of nationalism. The strivings for the creation of a modern national State began in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. They represented a challenge to the family and clan system. If "familyism and clanism" had in the past prevented the rise of real nationalism, as Sun Yat-sen himself admits, they cannot possibly serve as the basis for a modern national State. The peculiar feature of China was that those antiquated social institutions survived there much longer than in other civilised countries. Instead of accepting them simply as immutable special features, one should try to explain those peculiar phenomena. Why did the unity of the Chinese people stop short at clanism? Are the Chinese people constitutionally unfit to develop into a modern nation? If this imperialist contention is admitted, then the Chinese nationalism movement has no reason to exist; and Sun Yat-sen's whole life was a mistake. Neither the followers of

Sun Yat-sen nor his critics would allow that conclusion. Therefore, the latter must reject the fallacious proposition of Sun Yat-sen, even if the former won't. The family and clan system persisted in China longer than in other countries because of the very slow development of social forces destined to disrupt it, and create the conditions for modern nationhood. The slow growth of revolutionary social forces was due to the backward conditions of production.

The rise of a nation is a very long process. Beginning historically at the disruption of primitive communism, it culminated in the victory of the bourgeois revolution. The duration of the process depends primarily upon the natural conditions of the country in which it takes place. In the second place, it is influenced, quickened or retarded, by the operation of extraneous factors. In China, it was very long and laborious. In the beginning, it was hindered by the defective conditions of production; later on it was violently obstructed by foreign intervention. But eventually, the forces making for the creation of a modern Chinese nation acquired sufficient strength to begin the struggle for freeing themselves from all impediments, internal and external. The cry "Down with the Manchus!" was the signal for that historic struggle. That cry was raised for the first time not by Sun Yat-sen, but by the Taipings half a century before his time. The objective significance of that cry was an attack upon the social institutions and cultural traditions which Sun Yat-sen proposed to preserve as the foundation of a modern Chinese national State. That was the basic contradiction of all his principles. A critical study of the history of his own country, in the light of the knowledge of social science, would have disclosed to him the fact that the continued existence of family and clan system had precluded the rise of a modern national State in China; he would have realised that the latter could not come into existence without destroying the former. Owing to his failure to understand the laws of social dynamics, Sun Yat-sen's political struggle against the monarchy ended in a fiasco. The fall of the Manchus was caused by the irreparable decay of their social foundation. It was the pre-capitalist mode of production, embodied in the family and clan system. A modern national State could be established in the place of the vanished mediaeval Empire only by the boldness of clearing away its debris. The betrayal of the Republic in 1912 showed that the bourgeoisie lacked that boldness. Even in 1924, Sun Yat-sen was

not able to learn from his defeat as the Provisional President of the Republic. His principle of nationalism, formulated in that year, still lacked the revolutionary social outlook, the absence of which prevented him from acting boldly in the fateful days of 1912.

The movement for overthrowing the Manchus with the object of building a modern Chinese national State on the very social foundation of that mediaeval monarchy could not but end in a blind-alley. Though foreign in origin, the Manchus had not introduced anything new in the country they conquered. They simply placed themselves at the apex of the Chinese social pyramid whose internal structure remained as before. They had completely adopted the Chinese culture. The relations of society and the organisation of State under the Manchus were fully in accord with the doctrines of Confucius. Like the previous native dynasties, they also worshipped Confucius as the Patron-Saint. Therefore, to overthrow the Manchus and spare Confucianism, was an impossibility One must go with the other. Sun Yat-sen's principle was to smuggle in by the backdoor what was thrown out of the front. An admirer of the cultural and social foundation of the fallen monarchy, he could only be a very bad Republican. His Republicanism lacked a revolutionary social outlook not only in 1912, when he cut such a sorry figure as the head of the Provisional Government; even in 1924 he proposed to unite China under a Confucian patriarchal State.

The contradictions of Sun Yat-sen's ideology reflected the class struggle raging in the country. He represented the strivings of the bourgeoisie when he advocated overthrow of the Manchus, made plans for a rapid industrialisation of the country, and proposed the establishment of a centralised State. But at the same time, his desire to reconstruct decayed social institutions and retain reactionary cultural traditions represented the frantic resistance of a dying social order to the verdict of death pronounced by history. Owing to the weakness of the bourgeoisie, the class struggle, as reflected in the ideology of Sun Yat-sen, was bound to be indecisive. They wanted something, but did not have the strength and the courage to lead the struggle for conquering what they wanted.

Indeed, it is in the nature of the bourgeoisie to be afraid of the great revolutionary change demanded by their own interest. Never in history have they taken the initiative in carrying through a revolution. It is also characteristic of the bourgeoisie to hark back to an

imaginary Golden Age when they are engaged in the creation of something which has never existed before.[21] But Sun Yat-sen's homage to the worn-out doctrines of Confucius, and glorification of the Golden Age of the Hans and Sungs, cannot be justified on the ground that he sought the semblance of the unknown new in the fam iliar pictures of the old. The result of a bourgeois revolution was no longer a *terra incognita.* The kingdom of capitalist heaven had been realised in other countries. The Chinese bourgeoisie were not required to explore unknown grounds. Yet, they held on frantically to the sheet-anchor of past traditions, because they were terror-stricken by the rise of the revolutionary working class.

In the beginning of their struggle against the monarchy, the bourgeoisie, as represented by Kang Yu-wei and Liang Chih-chao, showed distinctly revolutionary social tendencies. Later, they made a feeble attempt to set up a Republican State on the principles of modern democracy. It was after the working class had appeared on the political scene as a dominating factor of the revolutionary movement, that the bourgeoisie definitely turned their eyes to past traditions, obviously with the object of finding some possible guarantee against the dreaded future pregnant with fearful potentialities. They would welcome the advantageous results of a democratic revolution, if it was somehow accomplished. But the result of the revolutionary movement in contemporary China could not be expec-ted to be analogous to those of the classical bourgeois revolution. The bourgeoisie wanted the revolution, but were afraid that it might go farther than they desired. Hence their terror about the possibilities of the movement they pretended to lead.

It is not an accident that Sun Yat-sen's programme of national reconstruction rejected the philosophical principles of bourgeois democracy, while providing for the capitalist development of the country. His principle of nationalism was the ominous shadow of Fascism, cast ahead. In the period of proletarian revolution, nationalism tends to lose its historically revolutionary significance, and become an instrument of reaction. Sun Yat-sen's principles anticipated the development of Chinese nationalism. It created the platform on which a counter-revolutionary alliance could be formed by the treacherous weakling of the bourgeoisie and the feudal-patriarchal reaction. The bourgeoisie failed to carry on the revolution; but when the working class came forward to take up the historically

necessary task which they had so disgracefully failed to accomplish, they went over to the camp of counter-revolution.

The revolutionary anti-imperialist role of the Chinese nationalist movement has been very largely counter-acted by the essentially reactionary principle of Sun Yat-sen. Acting on that principle, the Kuo Min Tang subsequently abandoned the struggle against Imperialism in order to wreak fierce vengeance upon the working class which stood loyally by the National Democratic Revolution. But even apart from its relation to the revolutionary masses, Sun Yat-sen's principle of nationalism was reactionary because it would preserve patriarchal social relations at the cost of the individual; it would revive the Confucian codes of morality, sanctifying precapitalist exploitation; it would rear the National State on the subordination of the son to the father, and of the family to the clan. It was not even bourgeois nationalism, because it went against the interests of the bourgeoisie themselves. On such a social basis, it is not possible to build a modern National State which would create legal conditions for a free capitalist development. One who believes, as Sun Yat-sen did, that "China's Government in the past was based on justice and humane relatiots",[82] can never have a revolutionary outlook on the future.

With the belief that the patriarchal family was the model social institution, and his hostility to individualism, Sun Yat-sen could not possibly be a democrat. He was not. His principle of People's Sovereignty is simply a glorification of the Confucian benevolent despotism. Believing that the Confucian philosophy of State was the highest pitch of political wisdom ever reached by man, Sun Yat-sen laid down that, for the foundation of a genuine democracy, it was not only necessary "to secure for the people a complete system of political rights, but also to embody in the machinery of government the principle of intellectual leadership."[23] In his philosophy of ideal democracy, liberty and equality are but secondary things. The sovereign right of the people, abstractly conceded, should be hemmed in by the executive power vested in an aristocracy of intellectuals. The ardent propagandists of this philosophy of paternalism unwittingly indicate what would be its pernicious effect: the eternal wisdom of the immortal Confucius endowed upon the Chinese people the bliss of "genuine democracy"; modern China should not be deprived of that blissful heritage. In the blissful "genuine democracy" of the dark middle-ages, the Chinese people

were so free that in their language there does not exist a word expressing the idea of liberty, which "has no meaning for the Chinese people".[24] The usual Chinese expression for liberty means "running wild without bridle".[25] No commentary on the real nature of the Confucian social codes and political philosophy could be more damaging. The ugly urchin of liberty has no place in the ideal China of Confucius, so very crowded with the imposing figures of loyalty, filial devotion, kindness, love, faithfulness, justice, harmony and peace. And the sage of modern China interprets People's Sovereignty as the duty of paying homage to these traditional deities. Liberty, of course, is incompatible with such a conception of people's sovereignty. Improving upon the master, a disciple of Sun Yat-sen writes : "What the Chinese people really need is, not to fight for more personal freedom, which has no meaning in the minds of the common people, but to sacrifice some of their personal freedom, in order to gain freedom for the nation".[28] The common people of China are accustomed to slavery; they have no conception of liberty. Let us be grateful to father Confucius for having laid the foundation of this moral civilisation! The prophets of modern China do not propose to change this deplorable state of affairs. On the contrary, they believe that China will be a happy country, if her people can be sunk farther down in the depths of ignorance, and the deprived of the semblance of freedom that might have accrued to them without their knowing it.

The idea of liberty is naturally foreign to a social system which makes no room for the individual. Democracy is not to be dreamt in a political philosophy which proposes to build a modern nation on the foundation of the patriarchal family. Therefore, Sun Yat-sen's principle of people's sovereignty does not imply freedom of the individual. He and his disciples all along stoutly criticised the conception of personal freedom as a "Western innovation", not acceptable to China. According to them, it is not the individual, but the head of the family, who has to be reckoned as the unit of the socio-political fabric of modern China. The individual should be subordinated to the head of the family; the relation between the two should be governed by the codes of conduct formulated nearly three thousand years ago. Observation of the moral codes laid down by Confucius and Mencius reduces the individual to a slave. A nation built upon the foundation of patriarchal families is, therefore, like a corporation

of slave-holders. Sun Yat-sen's neo-Confucian State is meant to be such a corporation. He thought "that in the relation between the citizens in China and their State, there must first be family loyalty, then clan loyalty and finally national loyalty".[37] He failed to see that a social system thus graded into stereotyped categories could not possibly serve as the basis of modern political nationhood. Such a system was the background of mediaeval autocratic States.

The Republicanism of the Chinese bourgeoisie was wrecked on the rock of this reactionary conception of social relations. They were still wedded to social relations which constituted the foundation of the monarchist State; therefore, they could set up a shadow republic only to betray it. The Republican State is the political expression of a social system having the individual for its basic unit. Individualism is not the specific feature of any particular geographical area. No social institution or theory is Individualism was the philosophy of the rising bourgeoisie. Its object was to free human labour from uneconomic exploitation. Should the Chinese bourgeoisie overthrow the monarchy, resist imperialist domination and capture political power through the creation of a centralised State, they must scrap the patriarchal family for individualism. Confucianism is the philosophy of a class which stands in the way of everything the bourgeoisie strive for, whereas individualism is the philosophy of the bourgeoisie. The marked hostility to individualism shows that the principles of Sun Yat-sen were far from being even the ideology of a bourgeois revolution.

The negation of individual liberty logically leads one to question the theory of legal equality—another ideological canon of the bourgeois revolution. Sun Yat-sen disagreed with the doctrine of "natural right". But he was not inspired by a more revolutionary outlook. He disagreed with that fundamental principle of bourgeois revolution from a reactionary standpoint. He contested the doctrine of legal equality on the ground that inequality was the natural condition: it could not be removed. Equality was not possible. The only thing possible to do would be to take off the edge of natural inequality by benevolence on the part of the superior and loyalty on the part of the inferior. Refuting Rousseau's theory that equality is the gift of nature, Sun Yat-sen maintained that the contrary was the fact: that human beings are unequally endowed by nature. He divided them into bad, stupid, common-place, talented, wise and the prophetic. Oa the authority of the ancient sages, he asserted that the latter

categories must rule over the former. According to him, social conditions produced by such a regulation of human relations are the ideal. The basic principle of the government of modern China, as planned by Sun Yat-sen, was laid down by Mencius over two thousand years ago. It is: "Those who labour with the mind are the rulers, and those who labour with the body are the ruled."[28] Of course, just on the point of assuming the leadership of a mass upheaval, Sun Yat-sen could not refer to the outspoken doctrine of class domination He sought out from the repository of ancient wisdom ambiguous metaphysical passages for his text. But the teachings of the old sages which, according to him, laid the basis of ideal democracy, could all be boiled down to the dictum of Mencius formulated with a bold directness. People's sovereignty is a metaphysical conception. It becomes completely non-existent when individual liberty and legal equality are given no place in a political philosophy. In that case, its practical expression is no longer representative government. The sovereignty belongs to the people; but they are not able to exercise it. Therefore, the task of administering public affairs should be entrusted to a special class of people. The transfer of power does not take place from the bottom—through the election of a parliament in which the sovereignty of the people is vested, and under whose control an executive administers public affairs. With Sun Yat-sen, the process is reverse. A certain privileged class, "those who labour with the mind", assumes this trust, as it were, by the grace of God. It undertakes the mission of educating the people. There is no democracy in such a system of government. It is benevolent despotism. It gives preference to hypothetical "good government" at the cost of self-government.

Sun Yat-sen was of the opinion that "the foundation of the government of a nation must be based upon the rights of the people, but the administration of the governmental machinery ought to be entrusted to experts".[29] It is not stipulated that the experts should work under the control of, and be constantly responsible to, some superior organ embodying popular sovereignty. That would be a very near approach to bourgeois democracy. Sun Yat-sen demanded that the experts should be given a free hand, and maintained that only on that condition could the government of a country be "efficient and harmless". It is as likely as not that such a dictatorship of the chosen elite would be efficient. But it

is a bold assertion to make that it would be harmless.

The dictatorship of the elite, not chosen, but self-appointed, will be supported by an exceeding cumbersome bureaucracy, hardly to be distinguished from that of the old regime. Sun Yat-sen's "Five-Power Constitution" is supposed to be a great improvement upon the "uncontrolled democracy" of the West. But it makes no provision for the exercise of popular sovereignty. It is a mechanical plan of distributing power inside the ruling clique. The legislative, judicial, executive, examining and censorial branches are not so many organs of the State. They are mere departments of the government. A monstrous bureaucratic machinery is to be set up for the mutual control of the members of the ruling clique. Such a structure is appropriate to a State which incorporates powerful factors of decentralism. Such a top-heavy machinery is needed when some sort of a central authority has got to be created in the midst of conflicting forces. In other wards, it is the structure of a feudal State. Having no organic connection with the people, drawing its authority from nowhere, responsible to none, the five-barrel government of Sun Yat-sen is autocratic in Constitution, dictatorial in outlook and impotent in practice. This has been proved by the fiasco of the Nanking Government, where the nationalist bourgeoisie endeavoured to set up an administrative machinery on the lines laid down by Sun Yat-sen.

The essence of the first two principles of Sun Yat-sen is class domination. But he did not advocate that the bourgeoisie should replace the feudal-patriarchal aristocracy as the ruling class. That would be a revolutionary proposition. His was the ideology of an alliance for the perpetuation of the class domination. Unable to create a new social order, afraid of revolution, the Chinese bourgeoisie sought to make a compromise with feudal-patriarchal reaction. Sun Yat-sen was the ideologist of the compromise. As such, he can be compared with Confucius who also was a philosopher of compromise. The difference is that Confucius produced original thoughts, whereas his distant progeny dished out undigested ideas borrowed from others. That was a petit-bourgeois characteristic. The outlook of the petit-bourgeoisie was clouded and confused because they were not the possessor of the modern means of production which would eventually destroy pre-capitalist social relations. The big bourgeoisie, concentrated in the industrial centres like Shanghai, had no patience

for Sun Yat-sen's reactionary extravagances. They would completely wipe out all old traditions. If they did not make any serious attempt, that was not because of any love for old ideas and antiquated institutions. The fear of revolution stayed their hand. Not having the strength to accomplish the task by themselves, they also Jacked the courage to seek an alliance with the revolutionary masses for the purpose. But they did not idealise the dead past; they only waited for it to be cleared away.

The third principle of Sun Yat-sen has been subjected to the most amazing interpretation. A mere glance over his lectures on "People's Livelihood" would be enough to absolve him of the least deviation towards socialism. How could one not believing even in democracy, ever be a Socialist? Sun Yat-sen was not a Socialist, and he made it very clear. His role and the social significance of his views, however, are to be judged not by his criticism of the Marxian theory, but by his disagreement with the fundamental principles of the bourgeois revolution. Faithful to his class, he naturally opposed the theory of the proletarian revolution. But at the same time he failed to serve his own class when he asked modern China to remain wedded to Confucian traditions and reject the doctrines of the philosophers of the bourgeois revolution. Criticism of the doctrines of Rousseau, for example, is revolutionary when it leads to an agreement with Marx. Otherwise, it is reactionary. But Sun Yat-sen did not criticise the doctrines of the philosophers of the bourgeois , revolution with a greater revolutionary spirit. He could not possibly agree with Marx, because his ideas and social outlook were even more backward than those of the early pioneers of the bourgeois revolution. Sun Yat-sen should be judged by his failure to advocate a bourgeois revolution.

His third principle should be examined not to ascertain whether he was a Socialist or not; the object of examination should be to find out if his doctrine of "People's Livelihood" implied any radical change in the established feudal-partiarchal relations of property. Taking his cue from the bourgeois liberals of other countries, Sun Yat-sen laid-down elaborate plans for composing the antagonism between capital and labour. But he failed to face other problems of the Chinese Revolution. He could not possibly solve the question of the livelihood of the Chinese people without finding a way to free the basic industry of the country from pre-capitalist forms of exploitation.

He did talk vaguely of "the equal distribution of land". But here again, he started from the old paternalist point of view. He did not advocate abolition of feudal rights and transfer of the ownership of land to be cultivator. He only proposed nationalisation of land value as the way to effect the equal distribution of land."[30] That ambiguous programme was liable to elastic interpretations. When a few years later the agrarian problem became acute, the peasants began to take possession of the land, the followers of Sun Yat-sen, acting on his authority, declared war upon them. Sun Yat-sen's principle evidently did not imply transfer of the proprietorship of land from the parasitic owner to the toiling peasant. He was opposed to the basic task of the bourgeois revolution. He could not be otherwise; for, in that case, his theory of nationalism and his conception of State organisation would be all upset. He glorified the past because he was opposed to the revolution which alone could throw the doors of future development open before the Chinese people. Distribution of land, in the sense of transferring the ownership to the peasantry, would mean the disruption of the family and clan organisation which were to be preserved as the foundation for the Non-Confucian Chinese National State. Such a change of property relations would replace the family by the individual as the basic unit of society. The conditions for the rise of the democratic State would be created. Sun Yat-sen was opposed to such a revolutionary reconstruction of society.

By "equal distribution of land", he obviously meant reversion to the old tribal system under which the King as the absolute owner distributed the land to be collectively cultivated by family groups. His five-barrel government, feudal in outlook and democratic not even in formal Constitution, would take the place of the monarch as the modern *pater familias.* It would inherit the right of the feudal King, and by virtue of its being composed of "experts" of the governing class, would administer national property. Since the basis of the nation, and its "genuinely democratic Government", would still be the patriarchal family, individual ownership of land could not be legalised. The legal admission of the individual's right to own land would eliminate the family as the unit of the socio-political structure of the country. Therefore, the equal distribution of land, advocated by Sun Yat-sen could not go to the extent of transferring ownership to the peasant. He suggested "nationalisation of the increase of land

value" to hinder concentration of land in large estates. That is also an old story. The patriarchal monarchs of China constantly struggled throughout the ages against the aggrandisement of the feudal lords.

While holding fast on to the sheet-anchor of the feudal-patriarchal social relations, Sun Yat-sen nevertheless cast wistful glances on the possibilities of the capitalist development of China. Indeed, the essence of his policy was not to abandon the old hulk, which was still afloat, though precariously, until the new vessel was steady on the stormy sea. But the successful march of Capitalism, coveted by him in his heart of hearts, was conditional upon the ruthless destruction of traditional values and institutions he nevertheless idealised. After all, the underlying motive was the hankering for the flesh-pot. But he shrunk before rude realities. He had fantastic ideas about the capitalist development of the country. That again was a petit-bourgeois characteristic,—to count chickens before the eggs are hatched. His ideal was Henry Ford whose achievements, in his opinion, refuted the theory of Karl Marx. His plan of developing modern industries under State ownership or Government control has been dubbed State Socialism. In that way, he proposed to endow upon China all the benefits of Capitalism free from its evils. But the result of State ownership is determined by the class character of the State. Sun Yat-f en's neo-Confucian State being free from all effective popular control, industries owned by it could not have the slightest socialist character. He frankly said that China's problem was rather of creation than of the distribution of wealth. Collective production can be independent of democratic distribution only when the means of production are not collectively owned. The "State Socialism" of Sun Yat-sen presumably did not include such ownership. Otherwise, he could not separate the production from distribution.

Discarding the revolutionary aspects of the bourgeois ideology, Sun Yat-sen joyfully adopted its reactionary implication. He criticised the revolutionary doctrines of Rousseau, but was in love with the reformism of Bertrand Russell. He was not against Capitalism, he simply wanted to reform it. He proposed to do so in China as has been done in the West through social and industrial legislation, State ownership of public utilities, income tax and co-operative societies.[31] That was Sun Yat-sen's "State Socialism", the introduction

of which would confer upon his country only the blessings of Capitalism.

The brief analysis of the main features of Sun Yat-sen's "Three Principles" shows that the sombre ghost of the ancient sage, who lived in the period of the dissolution of a primitive civilisation, still hovers over the accursed head of the modern China of the nationalist bourgeoisie. It shows how utterly unable have the bourgeoisie been to face and solve the problems growing out of the dismal background of a stagnant civilisation, and subsequently getting extremely complicated in consequence of foreign intervention. It explains why the bourgeoisie had tragically failed to free the Chinese society from the fetters of feudal-patriarchal relations, and reconstruct it on the basis of the capitalist mode of production. It enables one to understand the "Chinese puzzle", and makes it clear that only the approach from the point of view of the toiling masses can lead to its ultimate solution. In short, this analysis opens up the real perspective of the present situation in China.

A class, destined to lead a revolution in a particular period of history, produces a revolutionary socio-political theory as the token of its fitness for the role conferred upon it. Threatening the disruption of the established social order, the rise and development of the new class take place under the banner of a new revolutionary ideology. | In order to destroy the old, it becomes objectively necessary to challenge the morality of its reason to exist. The principles of Sun Yat-sen did not represent such a challenge to the old order. Inasmuch as these principles are professed by the Chinese bourgeoisie, and are the gospel of nationalism, that class and their political movement cannot be expected to play a revolutionary role. They have failed to produce a revolutionary social theory, because of their inability to lead a social revolution. As a matter of fact, it is not necessary for them to originate revolutionary ideas. That task has been accomplished for the entire world by the bourgeoisie when they played a revolutionary role in other parts of the world. If the Chinese bourgeoisie were destined to be a revolutionary factor, they would have appropriated the common heritage of revolutionary ideas which then would have inspired nationalism to become a liberating force.

The principles of Sun Yat-sen are not subversive. They are highly conservative. They do not represent the ideology of a revolutionary class on the offensive. They are the ideology of a class on the

defensive. Sun Yat-sen had not occupied himself seriously with social problems until the modern working class appeared on the political scene of China. When he ultimately turned his attention to those problems, he perceived the ominous clouds of revolution gathering on the horizon. With that potential danger staring him in the face, his concern was to save the established social order. With that purpose he expounded fallacious theories of a deceptive reformism.

Notes

1. Tang Liang-li, "The Foundations of Modern China".
2. Wang Chin-wei, who was chosen by Sun Yat-sen as his successor to the leadership of the Kuo Min Tang and Chairmanship of the Nationalist Government, is living abroad (in 1930), (He later became head of the Japanese puppet government in the north and died recently.)
3. Lineberger, Paul : "Sun Yat-sen and the Chinese Republic".
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. Tang Liang-li, "The Foundations of Modern China".
8. MacNair, "Modern Chinese History".
9. The Taipings were so-called because they wore long hair as sign of asceticism.
10. Tang Liang-li, "The Foundations of Modern China".
11. In this connection. Sun Yat-sen was of the following opinion : "After the overthrow of the Manchus and the establishment of the Republic, on the territories populated by the five races (the Chinese, Manchus, Mongols, Tatars and Tibetans), many reactionary and religious tendencies manifested themselves. Here is the root of those evils. These people do not possess enough power of self-defense; they must be united with the Chinese . under one centralised State. If the four hundred million inhabitants of China cannot as yet be united in one nation, under one State, that is her misfortune, and at the same time proves that we have not yet been able to realise the first principle and, therefore, must struggle still farther. We must create one united Chinese Republic so that the five races would constitute a united powerful nation. As an object lesson, I can refer to the United States of America which is a powerful aggregate, although it is composed of different nationalities. Such a nationalism is possible, and we must strive for it."—"Memoirs of a Chinese Revolutionary".

12. Proclamation of the First Provisional President of the Republic of China, January 2, 1912.
13. Sun Yat-sen, "The International Development of China".
14. Tang Liang-li, "The Foundations of Modern China".
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*
18. Sun Yat-sen, *San Mfn Chu-I* (Three Principles)
19. *SanMinChu-1*
20. *Ibid.*
21. Karl Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte "
22. Tang Liang-Ii, "The Foundations of Modern China"
23. *Ibid.*
24. *Ibid.*
25. 76/W.
26. *Ibid.*
27. *SanMinChu-I.*
28. Book of Mencius.
29. Tang Liang-li, "The Foundations of Modern China".
30. *Ibid.*
31. *Ibid.*

CHAPTER XI

THE KUO MIN TANG

For nearly a century, foreign Imperialism has been a formidable enemy to all the forces of progress in China. Nevertheless, its impact served as the midwife assisting the birth of modern China. "Complete isolation was the prime condition of the preservation of old China."[1] Inasmuch as it broke down that isolation, imperialist impact upon China had *objectively* a revolutionary significance.

The stagnant national economy of China was irreparably disturbed by the penetration of capitalist trade. Consequently, the social organisation, reared upon the corner-stone of patriarchal family-groups, was undermined. Moral codes and political principles, evolved two thousand years ago, to maintain a patriarchal social organisation, became meaningless. The family-groups were held together by domestic production. It was disrupted by the circulation of capitalist commodities imported from abroad. Millions of artisans were thrown out of the process of production, and were left without any means of livelihood. The product of land alone could not support them. They remained inside the family-groups so long as these combined agriculture with pre-capitalist manufacturing industries. With the ruin of handicrafts, the existence of family-groups as self-contained social units became untenable. Unemployed members could not be held together when, on the basis of the old relations, no means of livelihood were to be found for them.

"The advent of the Western merchant and industrialist in the nineteenth century succeeded in tearing asunder the Chinese social and economic structure."" Forced contact with the capitalist world economy sounded the death-knell of the system of self-contained local economy which had persisted in China for centuries. The silk raised by the peasant in far-off Kansu, for example, migrated all the

way to London, New York or Paris to find the consumer. Conversely, the cotton cloth worn by the same peasant was manufactured in Lancashire. The old China, in which everything necessary for human existence was produced inside the family-groups, the small surplus being exchanged in the local market shut up from the rest of the world, was no more. China could persist upon living in her "four hundred family-groups", only to perish. She must come out of that time-honoured abode, if she wanted to live and progress. She must scrap Confucius or commit suicide.

Once the age-long stagnation was broken, new life began to pulsate in her withered system. The free exchange of commodities brought into being a new class of people who found the old social institutions obstructing their interests. The wide-spread unemployment and destitution, caused by the disruption of self-contained domestic production, created the basis for such gigantic mass upheavals as the Taiping Revolt. With capital accumulated through trade, and labour released from feudal-patriarchal relations, thanks to the disruption of the system of domestic production, there developed capitalist industry along the sea-coast and the great rivers. At long last, a new China began to rise out of the ruins of the old.

Since the new China could grow only on the dissolution of the old, she must, therefore, be armed with a new ideology. In that respect, again, forced contact with the outside world was the starting point. The activities of Christian missionaries, though conducted with a different purpose, contributed to the dissolution of the old Chinese culture. As the ideological pioneers of Imperialism, they could not help doing that when Imperialism itself was playing an objectively revolutionary role. It was by the Christian missionaries that modern thoughts were introduced into China. Many young Chinese intellectuals enthusiastically hailed that new light. For their own purpose, the Christian missionaries found fault with the Chinese civilisation, culture and social system. But their activities produced a positive result. The young Chinese intellectuals were encouraged to take a critical attitude towards established institutions and traditional values. The foundation for the ideology of a new China was thus laid.

The rising tide of Capitalism could undermine feudal-patriarchal China only when the walls of her isolation were battered down by foreign guns. Similarly, an intellectual impetus from outside stimu-

lated the revolt against the Confucian ideology of old China.

When the old order finally broke down under the impact of foreign Imperialism, and the old wisdom of Confucius was disputed by Christian missionaries, the Chinese bourgeoisie began the historic struggle for the liberation of their class. The first shot against the national sage was fired by Kang Yu-wei in 1891. In a book entitled "The Spurious Classics of the Hsin Dynasty", the greatest ideologist of the Chinese bourgeoisie declared that the old Classics were all interpolations by scholars who lived about six hundred years after Confucius. The legendary, semi-divine, authority of the Confucian doctrines was disputed. But that was only an indirect attack upon Confucius himself. Nevertheless, it was a staggering blow to traditional culture. Its very bottom knocked off by a scienific historical research and a bold criticism. Confucianism was doomed to go down in the stormy sea of revolution. Kang Yu-wei pointed out that the cardinal principles of the Confucian social and political philosophy were enunciated in those spurious Classics. By that exposure, it was proved that the wisdom of the Old Sage, after all, was not eternal and immutable. In the past, it had been fraudulently interpreted to suit particular purposes. If it could be open to interpretation, then, there is no reason why it should not be interpreted again for similarly selfish motives.

Kang Yu-wei further developed his revolutionary thoughts in a second book, "The Reform of Confucius". The traditional belief was that the Scriptures were only compiled and edited by Confucius. In his second book, Kang Yu-wei maintained that they were really written by Confucius, and that he attributed legendary character to those works of himself with the object of creating an unchallengeable authority for his own doctrines. Kang Yu-wei's critical reconstruction of ancient history exploded the doctrine of the Heavenly Way. The teachings of Confucius did not express the Heavenly Will; they were formulated according to the social needs created by the conditions of the epoch. That was a highly revolutionary approach to cultural history. Kang Yu-wei was not a materialist; most probably he had never read Marx. Nevertheless, he not only gave a materialistic interpretation to China's cultural history, but himself embodied yet another evidence that thoughts are created by the material conditions of the epoch.

Kang Yu-wei's revolutionary ideas were subsequently incorpora-

ted in the first Reformation Edict of the Emperor Kwang Hsue, in which it was stated that conditions had changed, calling for a corresponding readjustment of social relations and political institutions. To the great consternation of the ruling class, it was further asserted in the Edict that the Divine Kings of the Confucian Scriptures themselves did not all act alike, having been influenced by changing conditions. From those premises, it was concluded that the ways of the Divine Kings of yore could not be blindly followed so many thousand years afterwards. Having deposed him so completely, Kang Yu-wei only proposed to reform Confucius. A typical ideologist of the bourgeosie, he had to find his inspiration in the past. Besides the Chinese bourgeoisie could inherit from Confucius just as much as the European bourgoisie did from Plato and Aristotle. In both the cases, the heritage was a philosophy of class domination. Kang Yu-wei proposed to reform Confucianism so that from a philosophy of feudal-patriarchal aristocracy, it would be the ideology of the bourgeoisie. Confucius had taught that one class should be subordinated to another. The bourgeoisie were quite prepared to accept that teaching of the Old Sage. Only, they wanted that the relation of classes should be changed in view of the changed conditions. In these days, all other classes should be subordinated to the bourgeoisie.

This philosophy of revolutionary reform was elaborated in Kang Yu-wei's third work, "The Book of the Great Commonwealth". Ideas developed in that book were remarkably similar to the philosophical radicalism of the eighteenth and nineteenth century Europe. The picture of an ideal society was discovered in the old Scriptures to serve as the standard for a criticism of the old social order to be subverted. The "unnatural" conditions of the present conflicted with the strivings for the realisation of the ideal society. They, therefore, must be removed. Arguing on this line, Kang Yu-wei came to the conclusion that the abolition of the patriarchal family was inevitable.[3] He advocated the abolition of family as a step towards the realisation of the Utopian "Great Commonwealth". Whatever might be the ultimate object, the disruption of the patriarchal family was demanded in the interest of the bourgeoisie. It would not lead to the "Great Commonwealth" of Kang Yu-wei's dream, but to capitalist democracy. That was a typical example of conjuring up the legendary past as the model of something that never existed before.

But Kang Yu-wei did not present an alluring Utopia to be reached by one jump. He had the perspective of an entire process of future social evolution. He stated clearly that the immediate result of the reforms would be the creation of a National State protecting trade and industry. He also admitted that there weuld be no equality in that State, nor would wealth be equally distributed. Private property would remain intact. So order must be maintained by force. That was his picture of the bourgeois society which should be built in the place of the Confucian feudal-patriarchal order. Evidently, Kang Yu wei anticipated a revolution. In order to invest that dreaded spectre with a halo of morality, it was suggested as a step towards the "Great Commonwealth". Historically, it would, of course, be a step in that direction. But the "Great Commonwealth" (the Communist society) will be ultimately realised not as the bourgeois philosophers dreamt, nor will it be a reversion to idealised primitive conditions. The speculation of Kang Yu-wei, like that of his European predecessors (Thomas More, William Godwin, Thomas Paine and others), was simply the logical conclusion of the philosophy of bourgeois radicalism which represented the ideological attack upon pre-capitalist society.

The catastrophic defeat in the war with Japan revealed the rottenness of the established order in China. In 1895, Kang Yu-wei founded the Reform Party, and petitioned the Emperor "to reform and save China". With his philosophical radicalism and remarkable dialectical understanding of history, Kang Yu-wei was the ideologist of a class still organically connected with the established order. Therefore, he remained devoted to the god whose clay-feet he exposed so mercilessly. Like Hegel, he also betrayed his dialectical approach to history by discovering an abstract principle transcending all phenomenal changes. That principle was the "essence of Confucianism". Objectively, a propounder of positively disruptive ideas, Kang Yu-wei personally failed to appreciate the full implication of his own ideas. He thought that the Manchu Dynasty could be reformed through the revival of the "essence of Confucianism". Even after the destruction of his party by the ruthless Empress Dowager, he was not cured of his illusion. Believing in the essential morality of Confucianism, he remained a conservative notwithstanding the revolutionary significance of his own thoughts.

But the Chinese intellectuals, who subsequently criticised Kang

Yu-wei, ostensibly from a more radical point of view, failed to come up to the standard reached by him. The petit-bourgeois pseudo-radicals remained wedded to a cultural tradition whose reactionary character had been exposed by Kang Yu-wei. They criticised him, but themselves could not do any better than he had done. Sun Yat-sen was the apostle of that essentially reactionary pseudo-radicalism, and the Kuo Min Tang was its political expression. Experience has cruelly exposed the reactionary implications of Three Principles of Sun Yat-sen. Yet, even now his disciples fail to appreciate the revolutionary significance of the ideas of Kang Yu-wei. Together with him, they also believe in "the essence of Confucianism which transcends the changes of time"; but at the same time, they condemn him as a conservative, because "he was unable to divorce himself from the feudalistic tingle which tainted the moral philosophy of Confucius".[4] Feudalism is not a foreign tinge that clouded the clear crystal of abstract Confucianism. Essentially, Confucianism was the ideology of a feudal-patriarchal society. All believers in the transcendental "essence of Confucianism", therefore, are apologists of the feudal-patriarchal social order. If Kang Yu-wei's proposal to reform Confucianism contradicted his criticism of the Chinese culture, his petit-bourgeois critics stultified themselves intellectually by criticising and idealising the same thing at the same time.

The correct interpretation of the debacle of a great thinker like Kang Yu-wei is that the implications of his own thoughts scared him into conservatism, which compelled him to discover something absolute in Confucianism after he had himself exposed that there was nothing absolute in it. His debacle was lamentable. But it has objective reasons. A through and through revolutionary ideology can be developed only by a revolutionary class. For historical reasons, the Chinese bourgeoisie could never be so thoroughly revolutionary. As a matter of fact, in no country the bourgeoisie have ever been so.

The social revolution caused by the rise of the bourgeoisie is only relative. The establishment of capitalist society does not necessarily require complete destruction of the old order. Under the predominance of capitalist economy, bourgeois society can accommodate deposed and emasculated feudalism, and even leave to it some of its traditional power and privileges. In England, for instance, the feudal aristocracy remained in possession of considerable power and privileges long after the bourgeois revolution. It

was the same in Germany. Strictly speaking, the bourgeois revolution was not accomplished in those countries. The bourgeoisie are forced to go beyond the limit of a compromise with the old ruling class only by an effective intervention of the revolutionary democratic masses. That was the case in France. The revolutionary role of the bourgeoisie is relative, because, the social transformation demanded by their interests need not be greater than a readjustment of class relations. Classes are not abolished. Society remains split up into antagonistic classes, one exploiting and oppressing another. Private property still remains the corner-stone of the entire social structure. Therefore, the revolutionary significance of the ideological pioneers of the bourgeoisie is bound to be relative everywhere and in all circumstances. Kang Yu-wei was not an exception.

In the light of the history of the bourgeois revolution, the debacle of Kang Yu-wei does not appear to be very surprising. In some other countries, the bourgeoisie was much better equipped and situated than in China. Yet, they failed to carry through the revolution. 'I hat failure, however, does not minimise the objectively revolutionary significance of the philosophy of bourgeois radicalism, which is inherited by the working class to be improved into a more definitely revolutionary ideology. At the end of the nineteenth century, the working class in China was not sufficiently developed to force the bourgeoisie to put into practice the social principles of Kang Yu-wei. Even during the abortive revolution of 1911, they could not influence the situation. So, the bourgeoisie sought to realise their ambition on the line of least resistance—through a gradual transfer of power. Nor did any effective pressure on the bourgeoisie to steer a more stormy course come from the lower middle-class, although pseudo-radical intellectuals hailing from that class presumed to pass adverse judgment on Kang Yu-wei posthumously. They could not drive the bourgeoisie into a revolutionary struggle, because their social outlook was as reactionary as Kang Yu-wei's was revolutionary. Indeed, the petit-bourgeois pseudo-radicals signally failed to attack the old order even as courageously as he had done. They could improve upon him only if they had the courage to snatch from his faltering hands the standard of revolt he had raised. But their pretentious criticism of Kang Yu-wei coincided with a retracing of the steps he had so boldly taken.

A proper appreciation of the objective merit of Kang Yu-wei's

philosophy came from the ideological pioneers of the rising proletariat. Inheriting the revolutionary thoughts of the bourgeoisie, they boldly indicated the way which the propounder of those thoughts himself feared to visualise and to travel. While petit-bourgeois pseudo-radicalism was conspiring with mercenary militarists to create a neo-Confucian State upon the decayed foundation of patriarchal relations, the ideological pioneer of the proletariat, Chen Tu-hsiu, buried Confucius, already slaughtered by Kang Yu-wei. He pointed out that to sanctify the feudal-patriarchal social relations did not represent a "degeneration of Confucianism" as maintained by the neo-Confucian scholars of the Peking National University; that it was the essence of Confucianism to do so. Deprived of the function of providing moral authority for feudal-patriarchal social relations, Confucianism could have no place in society. Eventually, under the leadership of the Communist Party founded by Chen Tu-hsiu, the working class declared war upon the decayed old order, and tried to assume the leadership of the unaccomplished bourgeois democratic revolution. In that critical moment, the petit-bourgeois pseudo-radicals rushed to the defence of feudal reaction, holding high the reactionary banner of Sun Yat-senism.

The Kuo Min Tang was the political party of the essentially reactionary petit-bourgeois pseudo-radicalism. Rejecting the revolutionary heritage of philosophical radicalism preached by Kang Yu-wei and his disciple Liang Chih-chao, it failed to assume the leadership of the bourgeois democratic revolution. Owing to its reactionary ideology, it shamelessly betrayed the revolution in 1911, and later on it ran pell-mell into the arms of reaction as soon as, under the pressure of the working class, it came dangerously near to Jacobinism.

The disruptive tendency of philosophical radicalism represented by Kang Yu-wei and Liang Chih-chao was opposed by the militant revivalism preached by the pundits of the Peking National University, led by Tsai Yuan-pei and Ku Hung-ming. In defending passionately the ancient Chinese civilisation whole hog, the latter carried the war into the enemy's camp. He ran down Western civilisation. The social significance of his "militant nationalism" stood out clearly, when, denouncing the revolutionising aspects of the capitalist civilisation of Europe, he glorified its worst consequences. He had nothing but contempt for the fathers of "Anglo-Saxon commercia-

lism". But in Bismarck and Disraeli he found the only saving grace of a civilisation accursed by its association with Hume, Bentham and their like.[5]

The defence by Ku Hung-ming was extremely damaging for Confucianism. The ardent neo-Confucianist had no patience for democracy. At the feet of the Prussian professors of Jena, Ku Hung-ming had learnt to admire militarism "as essential and beneficial to safeguard civilisation against the anarchy and vulgarity of the mob".

Tsai Yuan-pei, the leading ideologist of petit-bourgeois radicalism, was also an apologist of the ancient Chinese culture, though not so rabid a reactionary as Ku Hung-ming. Nevertheless, he opposed the tendency represented by Kang Yu-wei, not for its conservatism in politics, but on the ground that it threatened to "denationalise and deculturise China". The school of Tsai Yuan-pei maintained that in material affairs the Western civilisation was superior to the Chinese; but the latter was more advanced spiritually. The claim to spiritual superiority was advanced on the ground that morality was given a prominent place in the Chinese civilisation. It was conveniently overlooked that no philosophy could set up an eternal standard of morality unless it placed reason at a discount. No permanent standard of morality could be set up except on the authority of some super-human agency. Abstract morality is inseparable from religion which claims reason for its sacrifice. However, it is not historically true that morality was given a higher place in the Chinese civilisation. The Western civilisation is also based on an abstract conception of morality. Nevertheless, young China, brought up in the Peking National University, would cure the evils of the "materialistic" Western civilisation by administering large doses of Confucian morality. They were the self-appointed messiahs of a new civilisation which would be superior to both. They admitted that the Reform Movement of Kang Yu-wei also set to itself the same task, but complained that "in practice, the Chinese basis of this new civilisation was forced entirely into the background".[6]

That was a highly damaging confession, though unwittingly made. Mankind can attain a higher stage of civilisation only by taking its stand on the highest level hitherto reached. The critics of Kang Yu-wei themselves take pride in the fact that he evolved his radical philosophy without having any knowledge of the modern

Western thought. That being the case, it should be admitted that "denationalisation and deculturisation" need not be the consequence of a blind imitation of the materialist West. It was an inevitable process. In any real striving for reaching a higher stage of civilisation, the ancient Chinese culture must inevitably be pushed to me background. The germs of the new are imbedded in the old: but they cannot blossom in the fulness of their glory without bursting the shell which protected them in the past. As the greatest independent thinker of modern China, Kang Yu-wei understood this imperious law of social evolution. If petit-bourgeois intellectuals could learn from him, they might develop real radicalism, and build up their political party, the Kuo Min Tang, as an instrument for the revolutionary struggle.

But unfortunately, the founders of the Kuo Mm Tang failed to appreciate the revolutionary significance of Kang Yu-wei's philosophy and sought inspiration from the revivalist Tsai Yuan-pei. Indeed, not even the latter was the spiritual leader of young China as represented by the Kuo Min Tang. Its real ideologist was the militant reactionary Ku Hung-ming. According to the authoritative popu-larisers of the doctrines of Sun Yat-sen, "the substance of Ku Hung-ming's criticism directed against the Western system must be admitted as valid, and accepted as a useful corrective to the enthusiasm for Western ways and means of living.[7] The validity of that criticism is refuted by the fact that a Chinese, able to think independently, developed ideas similar to those constituting the cardinal principles of modern Western culture. The critics themselves are proud of this fact, although they are too reactionary to appreciate the ideas of Kang Yu-wei. However, that great thinker of modern China personified the proof that the evolution of thought is not determined by geographical location. It is determined by the exigencies of social development. The paradise of capitalism is coveted no less by the Kuo Min Tang moralists than by the "denationalised" renegades of the Reform Movement. But in order to enter that paradise, China cannot be free from the contamination of modern thoughts, either of native origin, or imported from abroad, which are bound to relegate Father Confucius to his proper place of honour in the gallery of antiquity.

By obstructing the economic development of China, foreign Imperialism also obstructed the growth of revolutionary thought.

Since it brought so much mischief to China, it was natural for the Chinese to be suspicious of the system of thought associated with the politico-economic order constituting the basis of Imperialism. The modern Western thought was mistakenly identified with Imperialism. Consequently, the Chinese bourgeoisie rejected ideas which should ordinarily grow out of their strivings for economic and political progress. The fight against Imperialism can be a liberating movement only when it is inspired with revolutionary ideas which heralded the rise of modern Europe. Those ideas are nobody's private property. They are a common human heritage. Their rejection renders a nation powerless in the fierce struggle for existence. The Kuo Min Tang discarded that common human heritage, and consequently failed to lead the Chinese people to freedom from foreign Imperialism and native reaction. The nationalist prejudice against modern Western thought is an ugly bastard of Imperialism. But revolutionary democratic nationalism should be able to distinguish between Imperialism and the modern social and political thought evolved in the European countries not by virtue of any innate superiority, but owing to the fact that they were more fortunately situated to act as the vanguard of human progress in a particular period of human history.

The lack of a revolutionary social outlook put the stamp of futility upon the earlier political activities which led to the formation of the Kuo Min Tang. Later on, a decidedly reactionary social ideology mocked at its apparent political radicalism. The plan to establish capitalism with the help of imperialist finance and the sanction of the Confucian tradition could only end in a fiasco. The ideologist of the Kuo Min Tang, Ku Hung-ming, condemned Western civilisation as inferior to the Chinese, because its criterion was comfort. The doctrine that the measure of a true civilisation is not comfort, that is, material well-being for the masses, was subsequently preached by Sun Yat-sen as the principle of securing a livelihood to the people under a regime of benevolent despotism controlling the entire economic life of the nation. His "Socialism" was evidently an anticipation of the totalitarian economy of the Fascist State. The Kuo Min Tang rejected bourgeois democracy and individualism in favour of that fraudulent brand of Socialism. Rejecting the idea of material well-being of the masses for the abstract conception of the "human principle", the Kuo Min Tang committed itself to the reactionary task of perpetuating the decayed feudal-patriarchal system

as the foundation of modern capitalist exploitation. All its objectively progressive tendencies hemmed in by reactionary preoccupations, it could lead the bourgeois democratic revolution no more creditably than the Reform Party.

The germs of the future Kuo Min Tang were contained in the Shing Chung Hui (China Revival Society), founded by Sun Yat-sen in 1894. The very name of that organisation revealed its real character. It did not look into the future. Its eyes were turned towards the past. A revivalist society cannot have any revolutionary ideal. For thirty years, until the Kuo Min Tang under the pressure of the masses entered into a short period of revolutionary struggle, it passed through a succession of readjustments, organisationally as well as regarding its political outlook. The object of the Shing Chung Hui was "to unite the patriotic Chinese people to cultivate the arts of wealth and power for the purpose of reviving China and securing her unity". Founded at Honolulu with the financial support of well-to-do emigrant merchants, it was clearly materialistic, in the vulgar sense. It expressed the ambition for "wealth and power" of a class of people who had no roots in the soil of the Chinese society. Notwithstanding the name it chose for itself, the society visualised an Americanised China. Whatever might have been the subjective predilections of its founders, the society objectively had no use for the Confucian junk which had to be cleared away if its ambition was ever to be realised. At the very beginning of his political career, Sun Yat-sen thus stood in a crassly contradictory position.

For the realisation of the object of the society, it was necessary to overthrow the Manchus. The first attempt in that direction was made in 1895, when a plot was hatched to capture the Yamen (seat of Government) of Canton. The attempt failed, and Sun Yat-sen again went abroad in quest of further financial support from the emigrant merchants.

The Shing Chung Hui recruited its members exclusively from the emigrant merchants and Chinese students in foreign Universities. Except the couple of years at the very end of his life, Sun Yat-sen had all along mainly depended upon the Chinese merchants overseas, with whose financial support he tried to enlist the services of military officers in a conspirative movement against the Manchus. That limited field of activity prevented him from having a broad social outlook and a clear political perspective. The emigrant merchants were

indeed uprooted from the feudal-patriarchal society of China; but at the same time, they were not connected with the process of production in the country. Promotion of their material interest therefore was not directly connected with a revolutionary change in China. They were a parasitic class, devoid of any intellectual vision.

That artificial social background determined the organisational methods and the political activities of the Kuo Min Tang in the earlier period of its existence. Having no basis inside the country, it occupied itself with plottings, usually with mercenary military elements. It remained so occupied even when the entire country was experiencing the revolutionary ferment which broke out in the Boxer Revolt. The abortive attempt to capture the Yamen of Canton and similar other activities of the Shing Chung Hui, took place in the midst of a seething mass discontent, on the very eve of the Boxer Revolt; yet they were in no way connected with that revolutionary movement. When the Boxer Revolt actually broke out, the China Revival Society made another effort to capture Canton, but not as an integral part of the general uprising. It did not do anything to express its solidarity with the Boxers. On the contrary, it shared the treaty-port view of the movement, attributing it to "the fanaticism of the ignorant mob incited by the Court". That view was known to be inspired by foreign Imperialism; it was uncritically accepted by the parasitic Chinese merchants connected more with imperialist trade than with the productive forces in China.

Even to-day the heroes of the Kuo Min Tang fail to appreciate the historically revolutionary significance of the Boxer Uprising. But it is no longer possible to dispute the fact that the Boxer Uprising was the first elemental mass protest against the imperialist penetration of China. Therefore, they magnanimously exonerate "the folly and stupidity of these Boxers", since their motive was "essentially patriotic".[8] Nevertheless, they still dismiss the movement as a machination of the Manchus. If even to-day the leaders of the Kuo Min Tang are unable to appreciate the historic significance of the Boxer Uprising, how much less could they do so when they lived as emigrants in Honolulu or Singapore and believed that the Manchus could be overthrown by smuggling a few dozen guns, or with the aid of a few disgruntled military officers. The attempt to capture Canton was an isolated event, an expression of the romanticism of a handful of student paid by the emigrant merchants.

The year 1905 marked another stage in the process leading up to the formation of the Kuo Min Tang. By then, Japan had become the base of operation of all Chinese revolutionaries. Tokyo was the headquarters of the followers of Kang Yu-wei as well as of the Shing Chung Hui. From there Liang Chih-chao agitated for a constitutional monarchy through his organ *"Sing Ming Hsung-pao"*. He was of the opinion that China needed a Peter the Great to be saved from her miserable plight. The press organ of the Shing Chung Hui was also published from Tokyo. It advocated the overthrow of the Manchus and appealed to the students to undertake that task. In revolutionary social and political thought, it was sterile. It agitated for the overthrow of the Manchus, but did not know exactly what should be set up in their place. It is interesting to recollect that in those days the forerunners of the Kuo Min Tang had not as yet discovered the moral superiority of the Chinese civilisation. At that time, they were not ashamed of learning from the West. Ill-digested lessons of the French and American Revolutions found a prominent place in their propaganda. They preached such non-oriental political doctrines as democracy, liberty, natural rights etc. They were still voicing the aspirations of emigrant merchants for "wealth and power". They had not yet come in contact with the intricate problems of the revolution in China.

Other organisations with the object of overthrowing the Manchus had also come into existence. The most noteworthy of them were Hua Hsin Hui and Kuan Fu Hui, led respectively by the redoubtable Huang Hsing and the scholar Chang Tai-yen. The former had considerable influence among the Chinese military students in Japan, and through them had established revolutionary nuclei in the Chinese army. The credit for the insurrection of 1911 belongs mainly to him and his secret military groups.

In 1905, a conference was held in Tokyo to unite all those revolutionary groups into one organisation. The Tang Ming Hui (United League of Revolutionaries) was formed. Although the active members of the united organisation were mostly students and young army officers, it received direct or indirect support from high Chinese officials who bad sympathised with the Reform Movement. The subsequent downfall of the Manchus was not due so much to the activities of the Tang Ming Hui as to the refusal of those high State officials to defend the tottering monarchy. That opportunist alliance

with the disgruntled feudal-patriarchal officials to bring down the Manchus influenced the social orientation of the future Kuo Min Fang. It would be perfectly correct as tactics to utilise all available forces in the attack upon the common enemy, provided that the attack was made with a clearly defined revolutionary purpose. But the fore-runners of the Kuo Min Tang only chased a shadow, and in that wild-goose chase sacrificed their soul for a discrediting alliance. They did not understand that the real enemy of the Chinese people was no longer the effete Manchu Dynasty, but the established social system. The high officials who connived with the downfall of the monarchy were stout pillars of that system, and therefore could not be reliable allies for a revolutionary movement- Nevertheless, the alliance might have been useful for the revolution had the Tang Ming Hui been armed with a clear programme of socio-political reconstruction. That was not the case. Under the pressure of the new allies, its social outlook changed imperceptibly, though radically. Until then, it represented the ambition of thoroughly "deculturised" emigrant merchants, having no direct connection with the established social system in China. The new allies were organically connected with the decayed feudal-patriarchal social relations, though developing an appetite for the profits of capitalist exploitation. The connivance of the allies was the determining factor to cause the downfall of the Manchus. Consequently they acquired a dominating position in the social background of the united party. In politics, superficial republicanism was replaced by neo-Confucianism. The ideological leadership was left to the petit-bourgeoisie who glorified social reaction in the guise of pseudo-radicalism and militant nationalism.

None of the groups represented in the Tokyo Conference had any political programme. They were united on one simple demand— the overthrow of the Manchu Dynasty. The records of the conference are very defective. The early history of the Kuo Min Tang, therefore, is composed mostly from memory and of the personal reminiscences of its fore-runners who participated in that conference. Two different versions of the programme adopted by the Tokyo Conference are given in two recently published books,[9] both written from the orthodox Kuo Min Tang point of view. According to one, by T.C. Woo, the Tang Mini Hui adopted the following articles at the Tokyo Conference: (1) To overthrow the present wicked Government; (2) To establish a Republican form of Government; (3) To maintain

peace of the world; (4) To nationalise land; (5) To promote friendship between the peoples of China and Japan; and (6) To ask other countries to support the work of reform (in China).

As against this, Tang Liang-li says that Sun Yat-sen proposed the following three points as the programme of the party; the first was accepted, the second was found too radical; the author does not mention what happened to the third. The points proposed by Sun Yat-sen were: (1) The overthrow of the Manchu Dynasty and the establishment of a democratic Republic on the American model; (2) The redistribution of land through the nationalisation of unearned increment: and (3) Maintenance of friendly relations with all the Powers, specially Japan. From the discrepancy between the two versions, the absence of any authentic record is obvious. None of the authors can be suspected of wilful misinterpretation. Nevertheless, the second book should be regarded as more reliable, because it was sponsored, if not actually written, by Wang Chin-wei. In any case, the obvious absence of a clear record proves that there was general laxity as regards a political programme. There must have been some loose talk, but no clear programme was formulated. All the versions of a programme supposed to have been adopted by the conference are presumably later interpolations. Now, the historians of the Kuo Min Tang read whatever they respectively like in those loose talks narrated from memory. Such a primitive organisation, mainly of petit-bourgeois youths, steadily became an instrument of the forces of decentralisation growing out of the decomposition of the feudal-patriarchal bureaucratic order. Under the influence of its questionable allies, who were in reality more of patrons, the newly formed party drifted away from the vague ideals of liberty and democracy entertained originally by the various component groups.

The sudden downfall of the Manchus confronted the Tang Ming Hui with social and political problems it had never envisaged before. It was a simple matter to agitate for the overthrow of the Manchus and even to demand the establishment of a Republic. The first part of the programme was easily realised: the Manchus were not overthrown; they simply disappeared. The demand constituting the second part of programme was positive. A Republie could not establish itself. The Tang Ming Hui proved itself to be entirely unequal to the task of enforcing the positive demand. The Republic of iis dream was indeed there, as if dropped from the heaven; but those who had clamoured

for it only deserted it at the critical moment. The first revolutionary crisis exposed the impotence of petit-bourgeois radicalism.

Unable to resist the reactionary designs of Yuan Shih-kai, the Tang Ming Hui sought alliance with other opposition groups. Its ranks were flooded with new recruits from the old officialdom who acted with no other motive than jealousy for the ambitious and powerful monarchist president of the still-born Republic. The new combination was so packed with conservative elements that Yuan Shih-kai had no misgiving in taking in his Cabinet five representatives of it. Even the Premiership went to one of them, Tang Shao-yi. Its nominal representatives had little in common; they failed to present a united front; the Tang Ming Hui was outmanoevered by Yuan Shih-kai; before long, its representative were forced to resign from the Cabinet. Thereafter it was split up into a variety of tendencies representing the diverse interests of its heterogeneous components.

One section represented high officials engaged in trade and through it allied with foreign Imperialism. They advocated unconditional capitulation to Yuan Shih-kai. They were averse to a civil war which would inevitably follow any determined resistance to his reactionary designs. In behalf of industrial bourgeoisie, the second group suggested a policy of marking time—cowardly opportunism. They were also in favour of capitulation, but justified it as a temporary measure. Owners of the new means of production and of capital accumulating rapidly, they were not altogether devoid of a perspective. They were confident of establishing their supremacy sooner or later. But they also did not want to risk a revolution which implied a civil war. This group dominated the Provisional Government of Nanking and forced Sun Yat-sen to deliver the Republican baby to the none too reliable nurse, Yuan Shih-kai. The third group was composed of those who had played the decisive role in the drama of the downfall of the Manchus. They were potentially the most dangerous. They included Provincial Governors and military Commanders who could not possibly have any sympathy for the revolution. They represented the tendency to split up the country into a number of practically independent States each grinding its own axe. That group did not care how the Central Government was composed. They would be satisfied if unrestricted autonomy were granted to the provinces. Eventually, that most dangerous tendency triumphed and blossomed forth into militarism. The fourth group representing the impotent petit-bour-

geoisie tried to hold high the discredited banner of Republicanism. But theirs was a quixotic venture.

The composition of the Tang Ming Hui was bad enough. It was a heterogeneous body got together on a negative issue, hopelessly differing as regards the positive aspect of the programme. The position was made still worse by the inclusion of several other groups, yet more conservative. That step was taken in view of the coming election. The niw combination formed in August 1912 called itself the Kuo Min Tang (People's National Party). The programme of the new party was: (1) Establishment of a democratic government of five departments; (2) Local autonomy for the provinces; (3) Political equality for the five races inhabiting the old Empire; (4) Friendly relations with foreign Powers; and (5) Reform of the economic structure of the Chinese society. The Republic disappeared from the programme of the Kuo Min Tang. "Democratic Government" did not necessarily exclude a constitutional monarchy. But the programme did not leave much room for doubt about the nature of the "Democratic Government". The demand to reorganise the Chinese Government on modern lines (American model, advocated by the Tang Ming Hui) was abandoned in favour of a neo-Confucian State. That is visualised in the first item of the programme. The important change in the political outlook took place in consequence of the amalgamation with other groups which had not supported the Republic. To secure the approbation of the class of professional officials, the new government must be a monstrous bureaucracy in the guise of the so-called Five-Power Constitution. To satisfy the bourgeoisie, economic reform was promised, but its nature was left undefined. Not a word was said about the future of the feudal rights and privileges. Patriarchal relations were not to be legally abolished. Even the most elementary civil rights were not granted to the people. The programme adopted on the inauguration of the Kuo Min Tang represented a long step backward. The left wing of the Tang Ming Hui had included in its programme some popular democratic demands.

The newly formed Kuo Min Tang won the election held in the beginning of 1913. It captured a clear majority in the new parliament which assembled in April. By way of a commentary upon the social composition of the Kuo Min Tang, it may be pointed out that its majority was much bigger in the Upper House than in

the Lower. The electorate of tbe former was composed of privileged classes. The "People's Party" had more supporters in those quarters than among the democratic masses wnich elected the Lower House.

Armed with a long purse, Yuan Shih-kai was prepared for the fight. He had contracted a foreign loan over the head of the parliament. He would brook no interference with his power. It must be absolute. He believed, not without reason, to have inherited it as a gift of the Manchus. Therefore, he naturally wanted to put the parliament in a position of subservience. Only a party with a clear programme, consciously backed by the people, could effectively resist the designs of the would-be dictator. Such a party the Kuo Min Tang was not. Consequently, in the first clash it fell to pieces. Its representatives in the parliament voted Yuan Shih-kai to the presidency.

In despair, the left wing started the agitation for an insurrection against the designs of the would-be dictator. Other sections of the party disassociated themselves from the agitation and denounced it as unpatriotic. That was an encouragement for Yuan Shih-kai. He took military measures to suppress the revolutionary agitation. The Kuo Min Tang could not put up any resistance. For all practical purposes it split into two antagonistic factions. The conservative majority tacitly, if not openly, made common cause with Yuan Shih-kai as against the disturbing activities of the petit-bourgeois left wing. "The Chinese bourgeoisie, on whom Sun had been relying for financial support, were apathetic and opposed further fighting, preferring material prosperity to constitutional liberty."[10]

When the petit-bourgeois left wing, under the leadership of Sun Yat-sen and Huang Hsing, was finally driven to a premature armed insurrection, it was completely isolated. It was deserted by allies won at the cost of political principles. On the other hand, it had not done anything to enlist the support of the masses. For that purpose, the programme of political democracy must be supplemented by demands for the abolition of social relations oppressing the masses. Petit-bourgeois radicalism did not go at all in that direction . Under the influence of a reactionary alliance, it had not even pressed the demand for political and civil rights for the people. The so-called "Second Revolution" was an effort made exclusively by the isolated petit-bourgeois left wing of the Kuo Min Tang. It was crushed, and

with it was destroyed the Kuo Min Tang itself. Immediately after the insurrection was suppressed, Yuan Shih-kai issued a decree unseating even all those Kuo Min Tang members of the parliament who had gone over to him. The traitors were paid in their own coin. Thus closed the first tragic chapter in the history of the Kuo Min Tang.

Under the staggering blow of defeat, the Kuo Min Tang went to pieces. It was split up into countless groups representing conflicting social tendencies which had united into a precarious coalition only to bring the Manchus down and to resist Yuan Shih-kai's Napoleonism, all so very ineffectively. But the petit-bourgeoisie had still not learned the lesson. Sun Yat-sen again tried to reorganise the party on the same principle of opportunist alliance which had just ended in such a disaster. In 1914, he proclaimed the reorganisation of the defeated party with a new name—Chung Kuo Min Tang (the Revolutionary Party of China). But one could not go very far only with a pretentious title. The half-hearted republicanism of the petit-bourgeoisie could not fight reaction any more effectively than the conservative constitutiona lism of the big bourgeoisie.

The reorganised party could operate only illegally. Before it could acquire any strength, it was again confronted with a very difficult problem. In the beginning of 1915, Japanese Imperialism presented the infamous "Twenty-one Demands" to China. The acceptance of those demands would imply China's unconditional subordination to Japanese Imperialism. All political groups in China had to define their attitude as regards that great danger. On that issue, the Kuo Min Tang again split up into two clear factions. One openly advocated unconditional support to the Yuan Shih-kai Government against Japanese aggression. The other still insisted upon opposition to the dictator. The leaders of the former group were naturally granted amnesty and permitted to return home from exile. Continuing its ineffective opposition to Yuan Shih-kai, the other faction came under the influence of Japanese imperialism. its leaders found asylum in Japan, as enthusiastic supporters of the Pan-Asia movement inspired by the Japanese Government.

Sun Yat-sen himself believed in the liberating mission of Japan. He argued that it was Japan's own interest to help the Asiatic peoples free themselves from European domination. He was of the opinion that China should make every concession to Japan, so that the latter could drive all other imperialist Powers from the field. Later on,

China would settle her accounts with Japan on the basis of cultural unity.[11]

That was a counsel of despair. The petit-bourgeoisie was completely bankrupt politically. They confessed their imbecility. They would invite a foreign imperialist Power to do the work they had so signally failed to perform. Sun Yat-sen's plan for "The International Development of China" was a logical conclusion of that defeatist attitude. Only, having been disillusioned in his belief in the liberating mission of Japan, he appealed to international Imperialism for help. Incidentally, the readiness to sell China to Japanese Imperialism revealed the great danger inherent in the cult of the cultural unity of Asia. Pan-Germanism was the ideology of German Imperialism. Similarly, the Pan-Asia movement was an instrument of Japanese Imperialism. Yet, Sun Yat-sen enthusiastically supported it.

It was not love for the betrayed Republic which induced the left wing of the Kuo Min Tang to insist upon the opposition to Yuan Shih-kai. It acted under the influence of Japanese Imperialism. On the pretext of opposing Yuan Shih-kai, it practically connived with Japanese aggression on China. The fight against foreign Imperialism is not incompatible with the struggle against native reaction. But only a revolutionary party can conduct such a fight on two fronts. Later on, under the pressure of the revolutionary masses, for a time, the Kuo Min Tang conducted such a fight. In 1915, as a purely petit-bourgeois organisation having no mass basis, it abjectly capitulated all along the line, on both the fronts. The failure of the Kuo Min Tang to support the so-called Third Revolution of December 1915 exposed the hollowness of its opposition to Yuan Shih-kai.

To oppose Yuan Shih-kai's plan to restore the monarchy, the Governor of Yunan rose in revolt in conjunction with other rulers of the Yangtse provinces. He was a follower of Liang Chih-chao, not a simple militarist adventurer. It was a genuinely Republican movement with the progressive bourgeois tendency represented by Liang Chih-chao. Nevertheless, Sun Yat-sen disapproved of the insurrection and, under his leadership, the Kuo Min Tang kept aloof from a movement which might have changed the history of China. The motive of that strange behaviour has nowhere been explained. Factional jealously has been suspected. Imperialist rivalry seems to have been the real cause. At that time, taking advantage of the European war, Japan was trying to annex the whole of China, for all

practical purposes. The Kuo Min Tang was the protege of Japanese Imperialism. On the other hand, the bourgeois group led by Liang Chih-chao sympathised with the Entente Powers, particularly France. The province of Yunan is adjacent to the French colony of Indo-China. Its access to the sea is the French-controlled railway. The revolutionary movement there evidently had to count upon French support. The movement was against Yuan Shih-kai; but if it succeeded, the Japanese plan of dominating China might be frustrated. Therefore, it can be reasonably assumed that the imperialist Powers antagonistic to Japan stood behind the movement. However, Sun Yat-sen's disapproval of that open revolt against the plan of monarchist restoration revealed how hypocritical was the pretension of the Kuo Min Tang to oppose Yuan Shih-kai even if that amounted to helping Japanese Imperialism.

In spite of the ineffective opposition of the petit-bourgeoisie, then at the service of Japanese Imperialism, Yuan Shih-kai went ahead with his plan. He dissolved the refractory parliament destroyed the Kuo Min Tang, driving it under-ground and its leaders to exile and won over the support of the big bourgeoisie. The latter wanted a strong central government, to put an end to the chaos, and establish law and order. They organised themselves into the Chin Pu-tang (Progressive Party) under the leadership of Liang Chih-chao. They looked upon Yuan Shih-kai as the lesser evil, or the necessary evil, because at that moment he alone seemed to have the power to establish an effective central government. Consequently, Liang Chih-chao was compelled to compromise his previous revolutionary social orientation. He now maintained that, in establishing a strong central government, the traditions of the country, the character of the people and their institutions should be taken into consideration. The new system of government should not entirely break with the past. The Kuo Min Tang opposed that point of view of the big bourgeoisie, though subsequently it was incorporated in the Three Principles of Sun Yat-sen.

The opposition to the conservative "Progressive Party" of the big bourgeoisie appeared to be radical. But behind that apparent radicalism of the petit-bourgeoisie, there lurked the ominous shadow of dying reaction. As against the demand of the big bourgeoisie for a strong central government, the Kuo Min Tang advocated decentralisation. That was the demand of the reactionary provincial Governors

who wanted to function as independent potentates, in their respective jurisdictions. Many high officials of the old school, not a few provincial Governors, and military Commanders stationed in the remotest parts of the country, were against Yuan Shih-kai not as a matter of any principle, but for sheer jealousy. To oppose Yuan Shih-kai, the Kuo Min Tang allied itself with those withering limbs of decomposed reaction. It had not learned from the same mistake committed in the fight against the Manchus. Incapable of confronting the reactionary centralism of Yuan Shih-kai with the programme of creating a modern democratic centralised State, the Kuo Min Tang became the instrument of the forces of disruption—the forces which presently assumed the ugly form of militarism, to ravage the country for years to come. It was an irony of fate that the Kuo Min Tang should be instrumental in the rise of an an evil which it had to fight later on. By opposing the creation of a centralised State, so necessary for the capitalist development of the country, and at the same time talking noisily of a revolution, which it could not lead, the Kuo Min Tang forfeited the support of the bourgeoisie while not yet finding its way to the masses.

After the death of Yuan Shih-kai, in the beginning of 1916 the "Short Parliament" of China assembled. Its main task was to promulgate a permanent Constitution on the basis of the provisional instrument adopted by the National Convention of 1912. The Kuo Min Tang was no longer the united majority bloc in the parliament. During the intervening years of storm and stress, it had been seriously depleted. Its fight against the movement for Restoration had been particularly futile. It had been crying itself hoarse about the Republic; but at critical moment when Yuan Shih-kai proclaimed his intention to found a new royal dynasty on the ruins of the Republic, handed over to him by Sun Yat-sen, it was from the conservative^ progressive, constitutional-monarchist, Liang Chih-chao, that an ideological defense of a democratic governmjnt was forthcoming. Sun Yat-sen organised his childish "Punish Yuan Expedition," which ended in a fiasco. It was the ideologist of the big bourgeoisie who formulated the programme for a political movement in support of republicanism. For all those reasons, thj K.UJ Min Tang could not play a prominent role in the "Short Parliament," which was dominated by the Progressive Party, its leader having elaborated a comprehensive programme of republicanism.[12] Under the leadership

of Liang Chih-chao, the parliament subscribed to the philosophical radicalism of Kang Yu-wei, and deposed Confucius from the throne of the National Saint. That was an ideological revolution. It remained for the Kuo Min Tang to go back upon it.

While Peking was basking in the fleeting glory of the "Triumphant Republic," reaction gathered strength in its very neighbourhood. The supporters of Yuan Shih-kai united themselves in the Military Party with the object of overthrowing the parliament and bringing the Central Government under their control. They succeeded in forcing the Acting President Li Yuan-hang to dissolve the parliament. But immediately afterwards, they fell out among themselves. Reaction ran rampant, and the country was plunged into a bloody civil war. That was the culmination of the tendency of decentralisation with which Kuo Min Tang republicanism was fatally allied.

Beaten everywhere, eliminated from national politics, the Kuo Min Tang concentrated its activity again in the place of its birth. Sun Yat-sen decided to begin all over again, and returned to Canton. That would have been an admirable resolution, had he learnt from the bitter experience of his political career and the woeful debacle of the Kuo Min Tang. But petit-bourgeois romanticism is incorrigi-ble. He had not learnt anything. His point of departure was again the same old military intrigue and opportunist combination with questionable allies. At the end of 1917, leftist Kuo Min Tang members of the defunct parliament assembled at Canton under the banner of the Provisional Constitution of Nanking. Under the patronage of the military Governor of Kwangtung, and counting upon the promised support from the militarists in the adjoining provinces, a rival government was set up. The doubtful character of Sun Yat-sen's new allies is admitted by his own admirers. An official historian of the Kuo Min Tang writes : "Dr. Sun himself had hardly any influence in this (Canton) Government, the members of which were too much concerned with their personal problems."[13]

The revolution was completely routed; counter-revolution reigned supreme; the Central Government disappeared in the chaos of civil war; the big bourgeoisie withdrew to the treaty-ports, there to make money under the protection of foreign Imperialism; and the Kuo Min Tang became an instrument of the reactionary militarists.

In the midst of that dismal situation, there appeared a new force. It was the working class. Petit-bourgeois intellectuals had

all along been the most active element in the Kuo Min Tang. They were drawn into a mass movement, and consequently came under the influence of the working class. That revolutionary influence rescued the petit-bourgeoisie from the quagmire of political bankruptcy, and enabled the Kuo Min Tang eventually to take up an effective struggle for national liberation. But the beneficiaries now try to forget or re-write that memorable chapter in the history of the Chinese Revolution. In writing the history of their own rise and fall, the petit-bourgeoisie put the cart before the horse. They cannot dispute the fact that the revolutionary labour movement infused life into the prostrate body of the discredited Kuo Min Tang. But they maintain that the new force was the creation of Kuo Min Tang ideologists. This theory contradicts historical facts; but it must be maintained in self-defense. Eventually, the Kuo Min Tang turned traitor to the working class after they had supported it valiantly in the abortive struggle for a bourgeois democratic revolution. That shameless treachery is now justified on the pretext that the Kuo Min Tang had the right to destroy what it had created. The labour movement however, was not a creatien of the intelligentsia.

In 1919, strikes occurred in all the important industrial centres of the country. The great strike on the Peking-Hankow Railway in 1920 introduced the proletariat in the political arena. Two years later, the seamen of Hongkong challenged the power of British Imperialism—a thing the Kuo Min Tang had never dared in its life While the anti-Japanese boycott in 1919 had produced no practical result, the Hongkong strike dealt a severe blow to the purse and prestige of British Imperialism. One was the action of the students while the other of the working class. In 1920, the Communist Party came into existence as the conscious vanguard of the rising revolutionary class. Those were the most outstanding features of a new situation in which the Kuo Min Tang persuaded itself to seek an alliance with the new revolutionary force.

Important changes had taken place also in the international situation, obliging the Kuo Min Tang to turn its eyes upon the awakening masses. The Versailles Treaty and the Washington Conference had rudely shaken its misplaced faith in Wilsonian Liberalism The plan of modernising China with the help of foreign Imperialism stood condemned by its own contradiction. On the other hand a new force had appeared on the international horizon in consequence of

the Russian Revoluton of 1917. A revolutionary proletarian State had risen on the ruins of an imperialist Power which had been China's worst enemy. The Union of Socialist Soviet Republics repudiated all Tzarist claims upon China, and extended a hand of friendship to the Chinese people in their struggle for national freedom. The Chinese working class was no longer a negligible factor. Apart from its intrinsic potentiality, already demonstrated in a series of successful strikes, it represented the united strength of the proletariat of the entire world. All those facts and considerations opened the eyes of the Chinese petit-bourgeois intellectuals, and led to the reorganisation of Kuo Ming Tang into a revolutionary party of the masses.

With the help of the working class, a Nationalist Government, not entirely under the domination of reactionary militarists, was finally established at Canton. The left wing of the Kuo Min Tang perceived in the rapidly growing labour movement a new ally. They also recognised in the Soviet Republic a friend who could be relied upon. The position of the left wing was strengthened by the result of the Hongkong strike and by the U.S.S.R. renouncing all the privileges and concessions acquired in China by the Tzarist Government. The Communist Party of China declared its determination to co-operate with the Kuo Min Tang in the common fight against foreign Imperialism and native reaction. It carried on agitation to rally the workers and peasant masses under the banner of the National Revolution. At the same time, it criticised the weaknesses of the Kuo Min Tang which had been responsible for previous defeats. It pointed out the way for eliminating those weaknesses, and for the Kuo Min Tang to become a powerful mass organisation. It worked out a comprehensive programme of National Revolution, which had not been done until then by any other political party. It called upon the Kuo Min Tang to broaden its social basis and advised it to include in its programme the eradication of social and economic evils. The propaganda of the Communist Party included a searching analysis of the social conditions. It was explained how political unification and economic reconstruction of the country were not possible before destroying the old social order, root and branch. By demanding a clean sweep of the relics of patriarchal relations, the abolition of feudalism and the promotion of the immediate interests of the workers and peasants, the Communist Party appeared as the leader of the democratic masses, and in that capacity offered to the Kuo Min Tang its

co-operation in the struggle for national liberation and democratic reconstruction of the country. The propaganda of the Communist Party greatly influenced the radical intellectuals who had always been the most active element inside the Kuo Min Tang. The ground was thus prepared for the re-organisation of the Kuo Min Tang as a political party of the people with a revolutionary programme.

In 1922, Sun Yat-sen had again been driven out of Canton by his militarist allies. From his exile in Shanghai, he tried to come to some understanding with the pro-Japanese Peking Government. But the latter also was presently swept away by the democratic mass movement developing since 1919. In the critical moment of his life, Sun Yat-sen met Joffe, the diplomatic representative of the Soviet Republic. From every side, the Kuo Min Tang as well as its leader came under a revolutionary influence.

The basic principles for the reorganisation of the Kuo Min Tang were formulated in a conference held at Canton in January 1924. There, Sun Yat-sen made a critical survey of the past with the object of finding the correct way for the future. Among other things, he admitted: "After the revolution of 1911 was accomplished, we were at a loss as to the methods we should use for reconstruction." He submitted for the consideration of the conference two important documents, drafted beforehand in consultation with the Communist leaders, particularly Michael Borodin, who had come to Canton, on the invitation of Sun Yat-sen, to act as the adviser to the Nationalist Government. Those documents opened up an entirely new chapter in the history of the Kuo Min Tang. The decisive factor which opened a new perspective before the Kuo Min Tang, however, was the objective conditions of the moment—the broadening of the social basis of the National Democratic Revolution in consequence of the political awakening of the masses. The Communists helped Sun Yat-sen and other leaders of the Kuo Min Tang to appreciate the new factor appearing on the scene. Should they fail to rise up to the occasion, they would be eliminated from the leadership of the revolution. The Communist explained to them the great potentiality of the new conditions, and suggested how the Kuo Min Tang could be re-born by readjusting itself to them.

The first document endorsed by the conference was subsequently issued as the Manifesto of the First Congress of the Kuo Min Tang. The second was the Constitution of the reorganised party. The Mani-

festo contained an exhaustive anaylsis of the conditions of the country, the formulation of the "Three People's Principles," and the Platform of the party. In the analysis, some of the past mistakes of the party were admitted. For example, dealing with the failure to reconstruct the country after the downfall of the Manchus, it was said that "the fact that revolutionary comrades were not able to beat him (Yuan Shih-kai) was due to their earnest desire to avoid the prolongation of the civil war as well as to the lack of a party that possessed organisation and discipline, and understood its own mission and aim." It was further declared that "since to them (Northern militarists) the revolutionary comrades had consigned power, it was small wonder that defeat was the outcome." The analysis correctly appreciated the nature and role of foreign Imperialism, thus preparing the way for an earnest fight against it. The dangerous charcter of the forces ol decentralisation was also recognised, and a determined fight against militarism was placed before the party as one of its initial tasks.

The analysis discovered four main political tendencies m the country, and classified them as follows: 1. Constitutionalism, which contended that China needed a strong central authority to establish conditions governed by law; 2. Feudalism, which held that autocracy resulted from the over-centralisation of power, and suggested local autonomy as the remedy for the situation; 3. The tendency to seek a settlement through peace conferences of discordant elements; and 4. The tendency to set up a government by the mercantile class. All those tencies were rejected, and the following declaration was made: "Although one cannot be opposed to a merchant government as such, our demand is that the masses of the people will organise the government themselves to represent the interests of the whole people." It was further postulated that the "Government must be one which is independent, and does not seek the help of others. It must depend upon the will of the whole mass of the people." The final conclu-~sion was that a super-class people's government was to be established through the application of the Three People's Principles.

What are known as Sun Yat-sen's Three Principles were for the first time definitely formulated in the second part of the Manifesto. There, they were called the Three People's Principles, and were set forth in their essentials; the result of their successful application was also indicated. The point of departure was that, for the realisation of its aims, the Kuo Min Tang must have "the support of the masses

of the country, namely, the intellectual class, the peasants, the labourers and the merchants." As regards the composition and organisation of the party, a complete break with the past was made by the statement that "the guarantee for the attainment of national independence of the country can only be found in close contact of the Kuo Min Tang with the masses." An interpretation of the principle of "People's Sovereignty" placed the struggle against foreign Imperialism in the forefront of the programme. That was a revolution in the political outlook of the Kuo Min Tang.

Previously, overthrow of the Manchus as well as of those native reactionaries who subsequently took their place, had been considered to be the only thing necessary for the realisation of the principle of nationalism. It was conceived as the union of the five races inhabiting the old Empire under a democratic State, but the latter was not defined and was interpreted differently by different intersts. At last, the finger was placed on the sore spot. The role of Imperialism was properly appreciated. Since the advent of foreign Imperialism galvanised all the forces of decayed native reaction, it had come to be the main obstacle to the creation of a modern National State. Therefore, the primary condition for the realisation of the principle of nationalism was liberation from imperialist domination. The ideology of the Kuo Min Tang still remained defective. The new programme was not a great advance in that respect. Yet, by virtue of taking up the struggle against Imperialism, the Kuo Min Tang became an instrument of revolution. The exigencies of that struggle drove it closer and closer to the masses; without their active support, the struggle could not be effective. Consequently, the Kuo Min Tang found itself obliged to take up a radical attitude politically, though there was no essential change in its reactionary social outlook. Indeed, it was only to win the support of the masses that the principle of "People's Livelihood" was conceived and given some concrete shape. But there was nothing of Socialism in it. At best, it was a half-hearted reformism in economic matters.

In the period of bourgeois revolution, it is usual with the petit-bourgeois Utopians to talk vaguely of Socialism. That was done by not a few ideological pioneers of the European bourgeoisie. Pseudo-socialist doctrines are then evolved with a double-purpose: The doctrine of "social justice" gives a moral sanction to the attack upon the antiquated forms of property; on the other hand, the plan for the

introduction of humanitarian reformist measures takes off the edge of capitalist exploitation. The theories of "nationalising land values," of single-tax, and even of the nationalisation of land, were all preached consciously or unconsciously with the same double-purpose. Not a few classical bourgeois economists were associated with them.

In his youth, Sun Yat-sen had made some acquaintance with popular versions of modern economic ideas. Therefore, it was not surprising for him to talk about Socialism and taxation of land values, when he came to realise that such humanitarian and reformist doctrines would serve the political purpose of securing the support of the masses. But all along, the Kuo Min Tang had been associated with such reactionary social elements who could not possibly brook even such superficial deviations. Vital questions of national economy, with the only exception of State finance, had never found any place in Kuo Min Tang propaganda. But no democratic movement could develop without raising those questions. Finally, they were raised by the masses. The people themselves began the fight for their livelihood. In that situation, it became a convenient policy to take up the question of people's livelihood. At last realising that the peasantry constituted the overwhelming majority of the Chinese people, the Kuo Min Tang naturally wanted to win them over. In the Manifesto of the First Congress, it declared to the peasants: "As China is an agricultural country, where the peasantry suffer more than all other classes, the Kuo Min Tang demands that the landless peasants and tenant-holders obtain from the State, land and the means for carrying on their agriculture. For this purpose, the State should form a land fund, comprised of the land belonging to the big landholders, or to those landowners who do not work on the land, but who fleece the peasantry both in monetary rent as also in kind."

At last the very core of the situation was touched. The Kuo Min Tang set to itself a task which could not be accomplished except through a social revolution. But it placed itself in that position without knowing what it was doing. That was made evident by subsequent events. Approaching the question of national freedom from the correct point of view, namely, anti-imperialist struggle, it found itself advocating a social revolution against all its convictions. But the bourgeoisie and feudal-patriarchal elements still dominated it. Under their pressure, the Kuo Min Tang also specified in its new programme the guarantee against a real social revolution. That initial

contradiction contained the seed of its eventual destruction.

The first guarantee was the class composition of the Nationalist State. As specified in the new Constitution, it was sure to act as a brake upon the enforcement of agrarian programme in all its implications. The ideal democratic government, based upon the sovereignty of the entire people, according to the new programme, should be attained after two preparatory stages had been passed. They were the periods of military dictatorship and of educative government. It was not specified how long those intervening periods should last. The judgment was left to the "Government of Experts," which would benevolently lead the Chinese people to the heaven of ideal democracy. Under the given conditions, the proposed Government of Experts could not be anything but a government of the upper, property-owning, classes. Such a government would be a reliable guarantee against any extreme interpretation of the social programme.

The second guarantee was the source of inspiration for the Three People's Principles. It still remained the traditional Confucian ideology, which excluded any revolutionary interpretation of the programme. The Kuo Min Tang committed itself to a programme of political democracy, agrarian revolution and economic reconstruction, but all those ideals were to be realised strictly according to the "moral and humane" doctrine developed to adjust the social conditions of two thousand and five hundred years ago. The new programme was divided into two parts: the principles and the platform. They contradicted each other. But that fundamental defect of the programme was pushed to the background by the immediate consequences of the reorganisation of the Kuo Min Tang. Notwithstanding all the contradictions of the new programme and the reactionary ideology underlying it, the Kuo Min Tang, for a time, became the rallying ground of all the forces of the National Democratic Revolution.

Public utilities and practically all the key industries were owned by foreign capitalists. That economic advantge was the basis of imperialist domination. To strike at the very root of the imerialist domination, the Kuo Min Tang declared in favour of the nationalisation of public utilities and key industries. It was stated in the new programme that "all enterprises which, either by their nature monopolise the whole branch of a given industry, native or foreign, or else which are too large in size to be directed by private entrepreneurs, such for instance as banks, railways, water-ways, etc., should be at the disposal

of the State." Since most of these specified enterprises were owned by foreigners, the implication of the programme was rather political than economic. Moreover, the statement itself was very ambiguous. It was not nationalisation that was proposed; it was State control. State-ownership of railways and control of central banks are not necessarily socialist measures. As a matter of fact, those measures are integral parts of the system of capitalist economy in the highest stage

of its development.

The economic part of the new programme with its apparent reformism, was eminently capitalist. There was nothing wrong in it. A bourgeois democratic revolution cannot possibly have any other programme. But the objectionable feature was the political part—the social composition of the "ideal democratic State," which made the eventual realisation of the economic programme very doubtful. Nevertheless, immediately, it had a revolutionary effect. In order to carry out the threat of striking at the economic roots of Imperialism, the Kuo Min Tang must possess a powerful striking force. That could be found only in the masses. They must be mobilised in a powerful movement against foreign Imperialism. Political mobilisation of the masses on such a large scale was not possible without advocating certain improvements in their conditions of life. It was not the vague reference to Socialism, nor the vision of an ideal democracy to be realised some time in the remote future, that rallied the masses under the banner of the Kuo Min Tang. The support of the masses was enlisted by including in the programme redress of their immediate economic grievances.

Even that relative revolutionisation of the Kuo Min Tang did not take place without resistance. The bourgeoisie were full of misgivings, and gave in only to prevent the party from breaking entirely away from their control. On the question of the relation with the Communist Party, the resistance was very stubborn. Apart from the peasantry, the Kuo Min Tang wanted to capture also the labour movement which was playing the leading role in the anti-imperialist struggle. But the labour movement was from the very beginning organised and led by the Communist Party. The petit-bourgeois radical elements in the Kuo Min Tang desired a close alliance with the Communist Party for yet another reason. Through its tireless propaganda of revolutionary nationalism as distinct from the confused agitation of the Kuo Min Tang, the Communist Party had acquired a

very great influence upon the young intellectuals. Therefore, close co-operation with it was an essential condition for the Kuo Min Tang to enlist the support of the revolutionary masses.

The greatest service of Sun Yat-sen to the Chinese Revolution was that he understood the potential importance of the Communist Party, and resolutely maintained that the Kuo Min Tang must establish a close relation with it. He had no inclination whatsoever towards Communism, He made it quite clear, when he advocated cooperation with the Communist Party and friendly relations with the Soviet Republic. Far from being under any Socialist influence, he formulated his principle of People's Livelihood on the basis of a criticism of the doctrines of Karl Marx. His social outlook remained coloured by an incompatible mixture of Confucian patriarchalism and capitalist liberalism. His policy of cooperation with the Communist Party wrs not the result of any agreement with, or sympathy for, either its philosophy or its programme. In his last days, Sun Yat-sen showed a belated tendency towards Jacobinism, and even that was very defective.

Perceiving teat the working class was rising in a revolt against foreign Imperialism and native reaction, Sun Yat-sen made a feeble attempt of imitating Marat in the critical days of June 1793. Just as the latter appeared before the insurgent proletariat of Paris to tell them that they needed a leader, insinuating that he was their man, so did Sun Yat-sen try to place himself at the head of the mass revolt, and divert it in the direction of promoting the interest of the bourgeoisie. But there was a great difference between the two. While Marat, inspired by the vision of a new social order, completely identified himself with the revolutionary masses, Sun Yat-sen considered himself to be the modern Confucius, come to make once again a happy compromise between the decayed old and the nascent new. He succeeded in overcoming the resistance of the bourgeoisie, and carried through the policy of associating the Kuo Min Tang with the revolutionary working class. But he bequeathed to it also the heritage of his reactionary ideology. The germs of Jacobinism were contained in the new programme; but the development of the Kuo Min Tang in that revolutionary direction was presently checked by the heritage of its reactionary ideology.

There is no ground for speculation about what would have happened to the Kuo Min Tang had its fouuder lived longer. Sun

Yat-sen died. But his spirit lived. And inspired by that spirit, the Kuo Min Tang before]ong went back upon the programme adopted in 1924 and became a fierce organ of counter-revolution. As a matter of fact, it did not go back upon its programme. It acted according to it, which was so imperfectly and ambiguously formulated as to be open to diametrically opposed interpretations. The programme proposed to set up a military dictatorship. That has been done. The Nationalist Government of Nanking is a military dictatorship. The programme of 1924 included the establishment of a "Government of Experts" to educate the people concerning the exercise of political rights. That also has been done, though partially. The Nanking Government is a close corporation of a clique of professional politicians who are responsible to none, and are themselves the judge of their ability to govern. It may be called a Government of Experts, but it certainly does not perform the function prescribed for it in the programme. It has not done anything to educate the people concerning the exercise of political rights. It has not shown the least inclination to introduce the most elementary measures of democracy. According to the departed leader's principle of the "Five Power Administration", it is a monstrous bureaucracy which is subject to no popular control, and rent internally by mutual jealousy among its more ambitious individual members.

Framed according to Sun Yat-sen's "moral and humane" principles, the programme of the Kuo Min Tang was not to abolish classes, but to prevent class struggle. To prevent class struggle in a society composed of classes means only one thing—the subordination of the exploited to the exploiting class. So, when eventually the Kuo Min Tang turned fiercely upon the revolutionary workers and peasants, to massacre them with an unparalleled fury, it did not betray any principle; it acted faithfully according to the fundamental principles of its programme. Sun Yat-sen could have no objection to actions which were only the practical application of doctrines and principles he had preached all his life. The revolutionary masses refused to submit themselves to a military dictatorship sanctified by neo-Confucianism. A reactionary social orientation did tot permit the Kuo Min Tang to tolerate the danger of a social revolution. The Kuo Min Tang became counter-revolutionary not by betraying Sun Yat-senism; by following the principles of Sun Yat-sen, it could not act otherwise, and to-day it is exactly what it was destined to be from the very beginning.

Notes

1. Karl Marx, "The Revolution in China and Europe", *New York Tribune,* 1882.

2. Tang Liang-li, "The Foundations of Modern China".

3. "The central idea of his system is the abolition of the family," R. Wilhelm *Sinica,* No. 2, 1927.

4. Tang Liang-li, *Ibid.*

5. Ku Hung ming, "China's Defence against European Ideas".

6. Tang Liang-li, *Ibid.*

7. Ibid.

8. T.C. Woo, "The Kuo Ming Tang and the Future of the Chinese Revo- . lution".

9. "The Kuo Ming Tang and the Future of the Chinese Revolution", by T.C. Woo; and "The Foundations of Modern China" by Tang Liang-li.

10. Tang Liang-li, *Ibid.*

11. This view was expressed by Sun Yat-sen personally to the author in the spring of 1916.

12. Liang Chih-chao's pamphlet against the restoration of monarchy and in defense of Republican Government is the most remarkable document in the political literature of modern China.

13. Tang Liang-li, *Ibid.*

CHAPTER XII

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NATIONALIST GOVERNMENT

The effort for the creation of an effective central authority ended with the death of Yuan Shih-kai in the beginning of 1916. A Government continued to exist in Peking nominally. But its authority did not extend much beyond the walls of the city. The country was broken up into several *de facto* independent areas, controlled by warlords engaged in a spasmodic struggle amongst themselves. The tendencies of decentralisation inherent in a feudal State were fully released by the disappearance of the monarchist regime. The Republic had been brought about, and again brought down by those same tendencies. The rival military groups began a fierce and endless struggle for supremacy, and particularly for the control of the maritime and Yangtse provinces. The group in power in Peking proclaimed itself as the Government of the entire country, and on the strength of its nominal authority granted valuable and extensive concessions to foreigners in exchange for loans. The money thus acquired was used for strengthening the army which was to devastate the country. But the larger grew the army, the more was the money necessary for keeping it up. In order to raise more money, it was necessary to control the Yangtse Valley and the coastal provinces. The great bulk of the foreign trade was carried on in those regions. Whoever ruled those provinces, could lay claim to the customs revenue.

In the midst of that chaos and preparations for a devastating civil war, a sacond effort was made to restore the monarchy. But the feudal war-lords had tasted blood. They would no longer have a Son of the Heaven to rule over them. The new effort to reinstate the monarchy was again frustrated, not by the bourgeoisie but by a rival group of feudal chiefs. For resisting the return of the monarchy,

they swore by the spirit of the dead Republic. Yuan Shih-kai wanted to ascend the Dragon Throne with the blessings of the United States of America.[1] The nominal Republic of the bourgeois counter-revolutionary Tuan Chi-jui, on the other hand, was supported by the semi-feudal Japanese militarism.[2] At the same time, the war-lord who ruled the rich Yangtse Valley was an instrument of British Imperialism. Thus, China was divided, on the one hand, by the mutually warring native militarists and, on the other, by the rival imperialist Powers.

The attempted restoration in 1917 was opposed not only by the military groups fighting for the control of Peking, but also by all the feudal chiefs throughout the country. Seven southern provinces formed an alliance to send to Peking an expeditionary army with the object of freeing the national capital from the monarchist clique. The Southern Confederation continued even after the defeat of the Restoration Movement in Peking. Its true aim was not only to resist the restoration of the monarchy, but to fight against the emergence of any central government. The alignment of the counter-revolutionary forces of decentralisation was taking place on a background of wire-pulling by unseen hands. Japanese influence was gaining ground in Peking. The monarchists were defeated by Tuan Chi-jui's Anfu clique, backed by Japan. It received a big loan in return for recognising Japanese Imperialism as the premier Power in China. The major part of the loan was spent in Japan for the purchase of war material. The Southern Confederation was the counter-move of British Imperialism. Therefore, it continued even after its ostensible object of resisting the restoration of monarchy had been attained. It did not do anything in that respect.

The bourgeois constitutionalists, who had been driven out of Peking by victorious feudalism, decided to join the Southern Confederation. Sun Yat-sen returned from his Japanese exile and went to Canton. His illusion about the "liberating mission of Japan" having been shattered, he reverted to the love of his youth, British Imperialism. With the help of his old feudal-autonomist allies, and the support of British Imperialism, he hoped to revive the Republic. In January 1918, a conference took place in Canton. There it was decided to establish a Directorate as the government of the seven provinces constituting the Southern Confederation. Sun Yat-sen joined the Directorate. The head of the new Government was the

robber-chief Chen Chiu-ming, who happened to be then the military ruler of Kwangtung. Such known reactionaries and traitors as Wu Ting-fang and Tang Shao-yi were members of the Directorate. The former was the leader of the conservative big bourgeoisie, which had compelled Sun Yat-sen in 1912 to deliver the Republic to the arch-reactionary Yuan Shih-kai; and the latter was a close collaborator also of Yuan, whom he represented at the Shanghai Conference which conspired against the Republic. The remaining members of the Directorate enjoyed a still more doubtful reputation. That strange combination of bourgeois reactionaries and militarist adventurers eventually became the "Nationalist Government of Canton".

The logical consequence of the formation of the Southern Confederation appeared to be a war with the military clique established in Peking with the help of Japanese Imperialism. But the war was avoided under the pressure of the powerful rulers of the Yangtse provinces. The wire was pulled again by British Imperialism. It supported the formation of the Southern Confederation as a counterblast against the growth of Japanese influence in the North. But a war between the North and South could not be welcome, because that would certainly cause a serious dislocation of trade in the Yangtse Valley. That profitable traffic was still a monopoly of the British merchants.

The plan of British Imperialism was to mobilise public opinion against the Peking Government which was accused of selling the country to Japan. It was proposed that a Peace Conference should be held in Shanghai in order to settle the conflict between the North and the South. Tang Shao-yi was the representative of the Southern Confederation at the Shanghai Conference. He proposed that the Peking Government should free itself of the Japanese influence. The Northern delegate could not possibly accept the proposal. The nominal Government in Peking could not exist without the support of Japan. The conference ended in a fiasco.

But Japan had grown into a real danger for the interests of other imperialist Powers in China. While they were engaged in the war in Europe, Japan had entrenched herself very securely in China. As soon as hostilities stopped in Europe, the Western imperialist Powers rushed to safeguard their interests in the Far East. They were determined to check the growth of Japanese influence. The First Peace Conference of Shanghai was held under their pressure. They demanded

that the conference should be held again. Instigated by the Western imperialist Powers, the Southern delegates repeated the proposal that the Peking Government should rid itself of the Japanese influence. As Japanese Imperialism was not likely to allow its protege to give in, a war between the North and South appeared to be imminent.

At that juncture, the bourgeoisie were once again betrayed by their feudal allies. A number of Generals belonging to the Southern Confederation, including the Generalissimo himself, were bribed by the Peking Government. They let it be known that, in the imminent war, the Canton Government could not count upon their support. The position of the Peking Government thus strengthened, its delegates at the Shanghai Conference rejected the demand of the Southern Confederation. But the treacherous Generals of the South did not stop short at sabotaging the Confederation at the critical moment. They rose in opon revolt against their bourgeois allies, and drove Sun Yat-sen out of Canton.

Yet another illusion was gone for Sun Yat-sen. Even the love of his youth betrayed him. She preferred the robber-chief Cheng Chiu-ming. Full of disappointment, Sun Yat-sen again cast wistful glances at Japan. Betrayed by his own feudal allies, he himself played traitor to his bourgeois companions. On his arrival at Shanghai, he carried on secret negotiations with the Northern delegation behind the back of the representative of the Southern Confederation. With the split in the camp of Southern militarism, and the fickleness of lower middle-class radicalism, the position of the big bourgeoisie became untenable. Even the backing of Anglo-American Imperialism was of no avail for them in that critical moment. The Shanghai Conference broke down. Japan scored a victory over British Imperialism. Her occupation of Shantung and the predominating position in Manchuria were recognised by the Peace Treaty of Versailles.

That agreement between the rival groups of Imperialism at the cost of China had an unexpected repercussion. The Chinese bourgeoisie, particularly the radical intellectuals, had set high hopes on the Wilsonian principle of self-determination of nationalities. The Treaty of Versailles destroyed that hope. The result was the beginning of a revolutionary nationalist movement in China. A tremendous mass movement against foreign Imperialism developed with amazing rapidity. Japan and the Peking Government were the chief

objects of attack. The urban petit-bourgeoisie, particularly the younger intellectuals, took a leading part in that movement. The Kuo Min Tang had always based itself on that social stratum. Nevertheless, in the beginning, it held itself aloof from the movement. Its social outlook was as circumscribed as ever; its political convictions were too unstable for it to grasp the importance of new movement. Just when the country was being swept by a mighty wave of anti-imperialism, the Kuo Min Tang was trying to shift its moorings from one imperialist Power to another. It had just been driven out of Canton where, with British help, it had built castles in the air. Still under the shadow of that disgrace, Sun Yat-sen was seeking an alliance with Japanese Imperialism, to be expressed in an understanding with the puppet government of Peking. The democratic mass movement was directed primarily against those two. Consequently, the Kuo Min Tang had to keep out of the movement which fortunately came under the influence of the revolutionary ideology of the proletariat. The leadership of the movement was assumed mostly by students who had received their political education from the Marxist Professor Chen Tu-hsiu at the Peking University.

The mass movement against Japan and the puppet government in Peking encouraged the formation of a rival military group in the North with the help of Anglo-American Imperialism. It exploited the popular anti-Japanese sentiment and succeeded in overthrowing the clique which controlled the Peking Government. The anti-Japanese movement won. But Imperialism as such was not weakened. A setback for Japan meant advantage for the rival imperialist Powers. The deciding factor of the situation was the democratic mass movement. But it was deprived of the fruits of victory, because it was without an organised leadership.

Meanwhile, the social composition of the movement had changed. In the beginning, the movement took the form of the boycott of Japanese goods. Naturally, it was concentrated in the big trading centres, particularly in Shanghai. There, it was reinforced by the appearance of the working class. After that it went beyond the original form of boycott and developed into mass demonstrations and strikes. In the beginning the merchants had supported the movement. Now they began to took upon it with suspicion and withdrew their support. Since the boycott of Japanese goods freed the market for their goods, even Chinese mill-owners had supported the movement. They also

deserted the movement as soon as it developed other methods of struggle under the leadership of the students influenced by Communist propaganda. The most immediate achievement of the movement was that it brought the students close to the working class. On the other hand, the latter was given an intellectually equipped leadership. The desertion by the big bourgeoisie and the defection even of the petty trading class, did not really weaken the movement. Encouraged by the downfall of the pro-Japanese Peking Government, it developed into a powerful democratic mass movement with general anti-imperialist slogans. Shanghai became its main centre. That was the home of the most advanced section of the Chinese working class.

At that movement the Kuo Min Tang became associated with the new movement by a sheer accident. The secret negotiations of Sun Yat-sen had failed. Upon the overthrow of the Peking Government, there remained none to negotiate with. For the same reason, on the other hand, the anti-Japanese movement could not have any further spontaneous development. It must have a positive character. It must be given a comprehensive programme, an organised leadership, and a certain organisational form. In other words, a revolutionary political party must evolve out of that spontaneous mass upheaval. Sun Yat-sen, with his reputation, was present on the scene. The students proclaimed him as the leader of the movement. The democratic masses annexed the Kuo Min Tang. The latter had a re-birth. It could not find its way to the masses; finally, the masses found their way towards the revolution and made the Kuo Min Tang their own, in order to build it up into the historically necessary revolutionary party of the people. The students and other members of the lower intelligentsia joined the Kuo Min Tang in thousands. In one city after another, Kuo Min Tang branches came into existence. Political propaganda was carried on in every school throughout the country under the banner of the Kuo Min Tang.

The inspiration of that regeneration of the Kuo Min Tang did not come from the principles of Sun Yat-sen.[3] As a matter of fact they were not yet formulated. The inspiration came rather from the modern political and economic literature which was read widely either in the original foreign languages or in Chinese translation. The teachings of Karl Marx had reached the Chinese youth and made upon many a very deep impression. Finally came the message of the Russian Revolution. The Chinese saw how the teachings of Marx could be

carried into practice in a neighbouring country. Lenin, not in person, but through repute, appeared on the scene to compete with Sun Yat-sen for the reverence of the Chinese youth.

Encouraged by the powerful mass support, the Kuo Min Tang recovered its base of operation. Sun Yat-sen returned to Canton in 1921. There, he gathered a number of members of the old parliament dissolved in 1917, and established a Nationalist Governmant. He became its President. Its programme was: 1. Destruction of militarism; 2. Unification of the country through military operations; and 3. Abolition of the unequal treaties with foreign Powers.

The contradiction in its own coiiposition again brought the Kuo Min Tang to grief. On account of its programme, the new Government came into conflict with the feudal military Governors of Kwangtung and the neighbouring provinces. They had not only formally acknowledged the authority of the new Government, but some of them had actually entered the Kuo Min Tang.

Destruction of militarism implied the abolition of feudalism, the conditions created by the decay of the latter being the social basis of the former. Unification of the country could not be achieved except through a successful struggle against the tendencies of decentralisation, which also resulted from the decomposition of the feudal society. The Kuo Min Tang had all along allied itself with those very forces. Ever since 1917, it had been supporting the Southern militarists against their Northern rivals. The first Cantonese Government was the result of that rivalry. But this time its programme was positive. It declared war upon militarism as such; the unification of the country was conditional upon a successful termination of that war against militarism which had broken up the country into practically independent regions. Finally, the militarists could not possibly participate in a struggle against Imperialism which was their patron. Consequently, the Governor of Kwangtung refused to sanction the programme of the new Government. He was a member of the Kuo Min Tang, and was the head of the first Nationalist Government established in 1917. He and the class he represented could not possibly vote for their own destruction. In vain did Sun Yat-sen try to convince him. Owing to his sudden change of front, the Kuo Min Tang was deserted by its former allies and supporters. They accused it of treachery and declared war upon it.

Meanwhile, epoch-making events were taking place outside the

narrow circle of the Kuo Min Tang to aggravate its internal contradictions, which eventually brought about the downfall of the Second Cantonese Government. The anti-Japanese movement of 1919 had broadened itself into a general anti-imperialist movement. The working class had come to the forefront. Strikes took place in all foreign-owned enterprises. The movement reached its climax in the famous Hongkong Strike of 1922. In the beginning of that year, 30,000 Chinese seaman had declared a strike to enforce their demand for increased wages. For two months, the port of Hongkong lay idle. The Government interfered. The Seamen's Union was banned. Its leaders were arrested, and martial law was declared. The workers retaliated by declaring a general strike in which more than 200,000 workers participated, completely paralysing the economic life of that prosperous British colony. The heroic struggle of the Hongkong workers against powerful British Imperialism aroused great enthusiasm throughout the country. The workers in all the other industrial centres, Shanghai, Canton, Hankow, Tientsin, etc., declared solidarity with their comrades in Hongkong. A mighty wave of protest strikes and mass demonstrations swept the country. Even the bourgeoisie supported the movement with sympathy and finance. The students joined the strikers in demonstrations. Merchants subscribed funds to the strike. British Imperialism followed the Japanese in suffering a heavy defeat, and the consequent loss of prestige, at the hands of the democratic masses of China. But this time, the fruits of victory were reaped by the workers themselves. The Hongkong seamen received a twenty per cent increase of wages; they also enforced their claim for a fifty per cent payment of the wages for the entire period of the strike. The Cantonese Government supported the strike. The seat of the Seamen's Union was shifted to Canton, from where it directed operations more or less with the support of the Government. The Kuo Min Tang, operating through the Cantonese Government, was at last actually engaged in a struggle against Imperialism. British Imperialism, on the other hand, regarded the Cantonese Government as an enemy, and helped the reactionary Governor of Kwangtung to overthrow it. Sun Yat-sen was again driven out of Canton, and went to Shanghai.

The bitter experience convinced the Kuo Min Tang of the necessity of fighting native reaction and foreign Imperialism together. On his return to Shanghai Sun Yat-sen came in contact with the

representative of the Soviet Republic, who helped him to learn the lesson of the recent experience. He advised that the Kuo Min Tang should be reorganised in such a way that it could become the leader of the revolutionary democratic masses and carry on the struggle for freedom on two fronts. Fullest support of the revolutionary working class, on the national as well as the international scale, was offered to the Kuo Min Tang.

In the beginning of the year 1924, the Kuo Min Tang was reorganised. Previous to that, with the powerful support of the working class and material assistance from the new international ally, namely, the Soviet Union, Sun Yat-sen had again succeeded in setting up a Nationalist Government in Canton. Having a mass basis, the new Nationalist Government was no longer at the mercy of treacherous allies, and could firmly deal with its enemies. The year before it had been overthrown by the militarists. But now it succeeded in crushing a counter-revolutionary revolt engineered again from Hongkong.

The social foundation of the Nationalist Government, however, was still not fully cemented. The Kuo Min Tang had not taken up the struggle against foreign Imperialism on its own accord. It had been driven to that position under the pressure of the revolutionary action of the democratic masses. The development and ultimate success of that struggle, in the last analysis, depended upon a radical change in the social orientation of the Kuo Min Tang. The reorganisation consolidated it as a political party, gave it a partially political programme, but it was not yet entirely detached from the alliance with classes opposed to the bourgeois democratic revolution. It tried to hold the balance between feudalism and the revolutionary drmocratic masses. The continued relation with feudalism did not allow it to take up a determined fight against militarism. It still allied with one military clique in order to fight another.

The social basis of militarism was the economic conditions created by the decomposition of the old feudal-patriarchal social order. Disruption of the pre-capitalist conditions of production and the slow and unsatisfactory development of modern industries together created wide-spread unemployment, causing practical destitution for the masses of the population. Millions were permanently unemployed, and there was no chance of their earning a livelihood in any normal and legitimate way. In that desperate situation, they had only two

alternatives: either to take to banditry, or enter the armies of the war-lords. There was little difference between the two. The profession of the war-lords themselves was rather pil lage and plunder than warfare. By joining their armies, destitute peasants could get the barest means of subsistence even if they received no regular salaries. The armies were mercenary bands, but as a rule the soldiers were not paid. They were prepared to help themselves as long as the General supplied them with arms. These, in their turn, were supplied to the Generals by the imperialist Powers. Consequently, in the last analysis, the armies of the war-lords were instruments of Imperialism; their very existence aggravated the exploitation and misery of the country. Decayed feudalism and imperialist exploitation together produced the monster of militarism. Therefore, it could not be slain without destroying both the factors that gave birth to it.

It was obvious from this analysis of the peculiarly Chinese phenomenon of militarism that the task of the Kuo Min Tang was to carry through an agrarian revolution. The country must be cleared of the ugly ruins of feudal-patriarchal relations before it could return to a normal economic state. Of course, the economic condition of the country could not be substantially improved or the poverty of the masses appreciably alleviated, except through the development of modern industries, so that large masses of the unemployed population could be absorbed in the process of production. But that could not be done overnight. It would take some time. Meanwhile, the immediate task was reorganisation of agriculture on the basis of a radical readjustment of agrarian relations. Elimination of all the pre-capitalist forms of exploitation would enable the peasantry to improve their mode of production. Agriculture, thus rationalised, would give some employment to the landless masses. The result could be achieved only through a redistribution of land. Finally, the extensive uncultivated areas could be brought under cultivation, thus absorbing millions of the unemployed. Pauperised and destitute peasant families would willingly emigrate to those distant parts if they were guaranteed the fruits of their labour, and given the initial help by the Government for them to settle down. The programme of the Nationalist Government evidently could not be carried out except through the adoption of measures calculated to produce the above effects. In other words, the execution of the programme involved an agrarian revolution—the abolition of the power and privileges of decayed feudalism. But the

Kuo Min Tang still attached the greatest importance to military operations for the unification of the country. Consequently, the Nationalist Government remained entangled in the alliance with feudal militarists who were avowed enemies of any radical change in the established agrarian relations. The Nationalist Government, even after it had been established with the support of the revolutionary democratic masses, stultified itself owing to its inability to realise that one could not conduct a revolutionary struggle in alliance with the enemies of the revolution.

The Nationalist Government was established under the auspices of two conflicting forces: the revolutionary democratic mass movement and a military dictatorship aspiring to bring the entire country under its domination. The second was an older force which had always been the mainstay of the Kuo Min Tang. But with that alone a stable Nationalist Government could not be established. That was done only when the former force came into operation. These two conflicting forces struggled for supremacy within the Kuo Min Tang right from the moment of its reorganisation. In the beginning, the revolutionary democratic tendency appeared to develop faster, forcing the Nationalist Government to go farther than the opposing forces would allow. But before long a decisive fight between the two became unavoidable. The conflict inside the Kuo Min Tang was only a reflex of the fierce clash of class interests in the country at large. During the short period of revolutionary activity, in its long chequered history the Kuo Min Tang became the scene of a bitter class struggle. It could have come out of that crisis as a fully revolutionised political party of the democratic masses. But in that crisis, the forces of reaction proved to be more powerful, and the Kuo Min Tang went to pieces. It gave up its transitory revolutionary role and came out openly as the organ of counter-revolution.

Nevertheless, the establishment of the Nationalist Government was an important event in the history of the Chinese Revolution For a time, it was an organ of the anti-imperialist struggle, and as such served as a powerful lever for developing the revolutionary democratic movement.

Notes

1. Professor Goodnow of the John Hopkins University, a friend of President Woodrow Wilson, came to act as the Adviser of Yuan Shih-kai. The constitutional justification for the restoration of monarchy, planned by the latter, was provided by that American Liberal.

2. The Japanese loans to the Tuan Chi-jui Government amounted to 200 million Yens. *(China Year Book* 1928)

3. About the relation of Sun Yat-sen with the democratic mass movement, one of his devoted followers writes: "Sun himself was unpopular with the broad section of the population from his acceptance of the presidentship of the Southern Republic in 1921 up to his return to Canton in the year 1923. He had emphasised over the purely military aspect of his reconstruction plan, and in his zeal of an armed struggle he paid little attention to the degradation in which the Chinese peasantry found itself. In this respect, Sun Yat-sen unconsciously became the instrument of the Chinese reaction." (Tang Liang-li, "The Foundations of Modern China").

CHATER XIII

THE THIRTIETH OF MAY 1925

No single day can be picked out as a turning point of history. But events taking place in a whole period often reach their climax in the happenings of a particular day which thus stands out as a milestone of singular importance on the road of history. Such a place is occupied by the thirtieth of May, 1925, in the history of the Chinese Revolution. What happened on that day marked a definite turn in the development of the struggle of the Chinese people against foreign Imperialism and native reaction. The happenings of that day were the culmination of events taking place previously, and led up to others of even greater importance.

The crushing defeat of China in the war with Japan and the unrestricted foreign aggression that followed the Treaty of Shimon-oseki, were the immediate cause of the Boxer Uprising. Twenty years later, China found herself in the throes of another wave of anti-imperialist revolt provoked by the Treaty of Versailles. Thanks to the social development during the intervening period, and political experience gained at the same time, the movement of 1919 was not so elemental as its predecessor. Though, in the beginning, it was not so stormy apparently, it was politically more mature. Therefore, it led to developments much more stormy than the Boxer Uprising. Owing to its political maturity, the movement of 1919 could not be misled as the previous anti-imperialist upheavel had been. The military clique, which ruled in Peking as the instrument of Japanese Imperialism, went down before that great popular onslaught. The fall of its protege meant a defeat for Japanese Imperialism. The economic consequence of the anti-Japanese boycott was meagre, but its political significance was great.

The anti-imperialist movement in the opening year of the cen-

tury was an upheavel of the ignorant peasantry, easily susceptible to religious superstition and the fanaticism that usually results therefrom. At that time the democratic middle-class failed to appreciate the revolutionary significance of the upheavel, and foolishly kept aloof from it. They went to the extent of disapproving it. Twenty years later they stood at the head of the movement as the owner of the social and political heritage of the Boxer Uprising.

The urban democracy, led by the students, was the most active factor in the anti-imperialist movement which developed as a protest against the Japanese annexation of Chinese territory sanctioned by the Versailles Treaty. Petty manufacturers, small traders, artisans, intellectuals and employees were all oppressed politically and economically. They aspired for political rights and economic advancement of the country. They participated in the anti-imperialist movement to express their discontent with the existing conditions. But presently it became evident that the movement could not freely develop towards victory without hurting the immediate interest of certain sections of their class.

The boycott of Japanese goods was the main weapon wielded at the beginning of the movement. It was a doubled-edged sword. It could not seriously injure Japan without making enemies of the native merchants dealing in Japanese goods. Had it been without a deeper social foundation, the movement would have succumbed to that contradiction. But behind the urban democracy, there stood the toiling masses who had initiated the struggle against Imperialism when the bourgeoisie was still living in a fool's paradise—while the latter still entertained an illusion about the nature of Imperialism. The contradiction of the boycott movement was a political education for the progressive intellectuals. It taught them to turn their eyes upon the toiling masses as the reservoir of revolutionary energy. Most of the pioneers of the revolutionary labour and peasant movement received their first political schooling in the boycott movement of 1919. It was out of that movement that the Kuo Min Tang grew as a powerful organ of revolutionary struggle for national liberation.

The first effect of the anti-Japanese boycott was dislocation of trade. That not only annoyed the compradores, bankers and wholesale dealers in foreign goods; it touched also the interest of small dealers who, at that time, happened to be an active factor in the anti-imperialist movement. It became evident that the urban democracy, depending on the support and sympathy of the big bourgeoisie,

could not alone carry on an effective struggle against Imperialism. The more advanced section of the petit-bourgeoisie, namely, the declassed intellectuals, looked out for other forms of struggle less hampered by contradictions. They discerned a new perspective in the sporadic strikes expressing the seething discontent of the working class. They realised that the overthrow of Imperialism and the establishment of a democratic government could not be realised except through a revolutionary struggle of the masses. That was a valuable lesson.

The deterioration of the economic conditions of the petit-bourgeoisie was not essentially a result of imperialist domination. On the contrary, the economic interests of the petit-bourgeoisie were closely connected with a prosperous foreign trade. The injury to the interests of the petit-bourgeoisie, urban as well as rural, was caused by the feudal character of national economy and the chronic civil wars waged by the militarists. Feudal economy hindered the expansion of the internal market, and the feudal character of the State apparatus obstructed trade in numerous ways. Militarism imposed heavy burdens upon rural traders and often practically destroyed trade. Feudal militarist autocracy deprived the middle-classes of all political rights. The background of the anti-imperialist movement was a revolt against those conditions. A direct attack upon Imperialism, however, rebounded upon the immediate economic interests of the middle-classes. The lesson of the experience, therefore, was that Imperialism must be attacked from a different position. Feudal relations not only choked the economic life of the country, but at the same time provided the social basis for imperialist exploitation. The subversion of those relations would, therefore, undermine Imperialism. But the petit-bourgeoisie by themselves could not find, and did not have the courage to travel, that revolutionary road leading to their own salvation. For that purpose, they had to come under the influence of the working class. The most important result of the movement of 1919 was that the democractic petit-bourgeoisie realised the revolutionary potentialities of the working class.

Between 1919 and 1922 the situation developed in two directions. On the one hand, the pro-Japanese Anfu Clique was overthrown by another combination of militarists, who in their turn fell out among themselves after driving their rivals from power. They split into warring factions led respectively by Chang Tso-lin and Wu

Pei-fu. The latter drove the former out of Peking and compelled him to withdraw to Manchuria. There he came under Japanese influence. Victorious Wu Pei-fu was hailed by Anglo-American Imperialism as the "enlightened" war-lord who should be helped in his strivings to bring order out of chaos in his unfortunate country. In the war between the two war-lords, the bourgeoisie sided with

Wu Pei-fu.

Simultaneously with the civil war, there developed a new force. All the industrial centres became scenes of recurring strikes. While the country was being broken up by bloody civil wars, frustrating all schemes of unification, the action of the working class represented a new tendency of cohesion. Until then, the very existence of the working class had not been recognised in the political activities of the country. But now it could no longer be ignored.

The strikes during the years 1919 to 1922 took place as integral parts of the general anti-imperialist movement. Taking place mostly in foreign-owned enterprises, they received the sympathy of the nationalist bourgeoisie. They took place in foreign-owned enterprises, because the latter, being the centres of modern industry in China, employed the most advanced section of the working class. Essentially, the strikes heralded the beginning of the proletarian class struggle. It was a coincidence of history that they constituted parts of the nationalist struggle. The relation, however, was not altogether accidental. Inasmuch as the nationalist movement was a struggle against Imperialism, the working class was vitally interested hi the movement. Because, Capitalism and Imprialism happened to be identical in China. The apparent accident of the proletarian class struggle assuming a nationalist complexion had a very revolutionising effect upon the whole situation It helped the petit-bourgeois intellectuals to act according to the lesson they had learnt from the contradictions of the boycott movement of 1919. It helped them to find their way to the revolutionary masses.

In the beginning, the strikes were all spontaneous. The employers were taken unawares and, therefore, had to give in more often than not. The spontaneous nature of the movement proved that it was not the creation of the nationalist intellectuals, as maintained by the Kuo Min Tang theoreticians. The spontaneous revolt of the working class opened up a new perspective before the democratic intellectuals. It showed them the way out of the impasse brought about by the

contradictions of the anti-Japanese boycott movement of 1919 For the foreign employers, the strikes were like bolts from the blue. Who had ever heard of the Chinese coolies demanding to be treated as human beings, asking for higher wages and better working conditions, refusing to sell their labour power unless a fair price was paid in return!

The history of China is full of instances of elemental mass outbreaks with primitive political significance. The Boxer Uprising was the latest. But strikes for enforcing upon the all-powerful foreign employers, supported by mighty Governments at home and battleships on the spot, concrete economic demands, was something entirely new They were not the expression of the blind fury of an oppressed people. They were the revolutionary action of a class, conscious of its interests and determined to defend them.

The strikes spread rapidly from one industrial centre to another Taken unawares by the spontaneous and swift action of the workers, the employers were obliged to give in. Most of the strikes between 1919 and 1922 were partially or entirely successful. The culminating point was the Hongkong seamen's strike which developed into a successful general strike. The success of the strike movement, in contrast to the meagre result of the boycott movement of 1919,'was yet another object lesson for the urban democracy. They saw'that the workers, until then completely ignored in the nationalist movement, could dictate terms to proud imperialists. Other classes had failed to agree upon a common platform and to create a united national organisation. In contrast to that failure, the workers came out of the first round of a victorious combat as a cohesive force with a remarkable spirit of solidarity. In the midst of the civil war tearing the country to pieces, that first victory of the workers laid the foundation of the political party which was to lead them in future struggles. The consequence of that victory also was to set up a centralised organisation to conduct the struggle of the workers for immediate economic demands throughout the country.

The Communist Party of China was founded in 1920. Its pioneers were the leaders of the democratic movement of 1919. Jts programme was not only to defend the interests of the working 'class but to free the entire Chinese people from imperialist exploitation and oppression by native reaction. Under the leadership of the Communist Party, the labour organisations set up in the industrial

centres, scattered all over the country, were united in the Trade Union Federation. In 1922, two hundred representatives of the newly organised labour met in a conference at Canton to declare the determination of the working class to conduct a relentless fight against the imperialist exploitation of China. That was nearly two years before the Kuo Min Tang reorganised itself with a programme which placed the struggle against Imperialism in the forefront. It is an unmistakable lesson of history that the Kuo Min Tang reorganised itself into a revolutionary mass party under the pressure of the working class. The resolution of the Canton Labour Conference was not an empty threat. It was the voice of a class that had already come to close gripj with powerful Imperialism, and came out victorious.

Imperialism was not slow to discover its deadly enemy in the working class. The economic demands of the working class threatened the profits of foreign capital invested in China, their action promised to infuse a new life in the nationalist movement. Imperialist interest demanded suppression of the working class. The native bourgeoisie also found their interests coincide with those of foreign Imperialism. The two composed their differences and made a united front against the common enemy. The Chinese bourgeoisie joined Imperialism in a crusade against the working class, because, in course of its development, the strike movement had transgressed its superficial nationalist limit and had extended to enterprises owned by native capital.

At that time, the native bourgeoisie were allied with the warlord Wu Pei-fu. The latter placed his military forces at the disposal of his allies for the suppression of the working class. The attack began in the coal-fields of Chili. In October 1922, workers were massacred there by the armed police. The scene of the next battle was the Peking-Hankow Railway. That important line of communication was owned by British capital. But for the moment, it was controlled by Wu Pei-fu, the protege of British Imperialism. The workers on that line, having organised themselves in several local unions, wanted to form a central organisation. The amalgamation was to take place in a conference. The preparations for the conference went on publicly for two months. There was no restriction. At the last moment Wu Pei-fu issued an order prohibiting it, when some of the delegates had already assembled and the rest were on the way. The conference decided to meet defying the order. But

troops had surrounded the building in which it was to meet. At the head of a large number of workers, the delegates forced their way into the hall and declared the conference open. The first act of the conference was to pass a resolution vehemently condemning militarism. Hs was to be expected, the conference was stormed by troops. The workers put up a heroic resistance, but could not possibly hold out against a powerful armed attack. The conference was dispersed. Its leaders were arrested and summarily punished.

The high-handed action of the militarists provoked great indignation among the workers. As a protest, a general strike was called. In four day the traffic of the entire line was held up. The movement spread to other lines. The democratic middle-class sympathised with the workers who demanded freedom of association, and punishment of persons responsible for the attack upon the conference. The situation appeared to be pregnant with grave possibilities. The bold action of the workers in defence of elementary civil liberties drove all the forces of reaction to unite in an open attack against them. Foreign Consuls and the directors of the railway met the Generals of Wu-pei-fu in a conference to agree upcn measures to be taken for handling the situation. By one brave blow, the working class exposed the close connection between foreign Imperialism, the native bourgeoisie and militarism. On the orders of foreign Imperialism, and to defend the interests of native capitalism, the militarists attacked the strikers with brutal ferocity. All along the line, nearly seven hundred miles long, workers were slaughtered by the soldiers of Wu Pei-fu. The arrested leaders were executed in the open street in the typical mediaeval fashion.

The massacre on the Peking-Hankow Railway was the signal for a general attack upon the workers in all the industrial centres throughout the country. Trade-unions were broken up by the militarists. The labour movement was then hardly two years old. Would it be able to survive such a terrible attack? It was feared that it would be thoroughly demoralised and completely destroyed. But at last, foreign Imperialism and native reaction were confronted with a force which was entirely different from others they had to deal with previously. The working class could be defeated, but not demoralised, much less destroyed. Under the staggering blow, the young labour movement was driven underground; in that condition it soon developed even a greater striking power.

On the other hand, the process of decomposition in the camp of militarism went on apace. Wu Pei-fu was betrayed by his chief lieutenant, Feng Yu-hsiang. Thus weakened, he was heavily defeated by his rival, the Manchurian war-lord. The wave of democratic mass movement reached the headquarters of reaction, Peking. After their brilliant victory at Hongkong, the working class suffered a defeat in the rest of the country. But its action encouraged the middle-class to expand the democratic struggle. In the beginning of 1925, the bourgeoisie made a feeble attempt to capture power in Peking. As usual, they depended upon the support of some militarists. The "Christian General" coquetted with the democratic movement in Peking, while he was conspiring against his own chief. Upon the realisation of his own ambition, he did not prove to be any different from others of his ilk.

But in the mean time, the storm-centre had shifted. Peking was no longer the political centre of China. Events there were not of decisive importance. Shanghai had come to be the real metropolis of China, and it was there that the next round of the battle was fought. The revolutionary action of the Shanghai workers became the outstanding feature of Chinese politics. It being the economic centre of modern China, the control of that city was the key to power. In consequence of the elimination of Wu Pei-fu and the debacle of the "Christian General", Shanghai passed under the control of a partisan of the Mancburian clique behind which stood Japanese Imperialism. But Shanghai was no longer to be a happy hunting ground of military adventurists. In the period of illegality, following upon the massacre of 1923, strong working class organisations had been created there under the leadership of the Communist Party. At the same time, the labour movement had developed freely in Canton after the establishment of the Nationalist Government. Shanghai, however, was the Paris of China. It must be conquered. What Shanghai says to-day, entire China will say to-morrow. It is not in the nature of the working class to take the line of least resistance. Shanghai was protected by a formidable array of imperialist battle ships and garrisoned by a huge Chinese army. Nevertheless, the working class prepared for a grand battle there.

In May 1925, there was a strike in the Japanese cotton mills of Tsingtao. The Governor of Shantung was a creature of Japanese Imperialism. He immediately sent troops to crush the strike. The

workers in the Japanese mills of Shanghai rushed to the aid of their comrades and declared a sympathetic strike demanding better treatment and regular payment of wages In Shanghai also the workers were attacked by the Japanese police and Chinese troops. The strike leader, Kuo Chung-hung, was arrested and summarily executed. Great indignation prevailed, and the strike spread to other mills with a lightning rapidity. The workers called upon the entire population to join the struggle against Imperialism. Acting upon the lessons learned from the experience of 1919, the students responded enthusiastically. A powerful democratic mass movement developed under the initiative and hegemony of the working class. Some leaders of the movement were arrested by the British police. A huge demonstration was organised to protest and demand immediate release of the arrested leaders. The demonstrators marched down the Nanking Road where luxurious shops catering to the foreign and the Chinese bourgeoisie mocked at the miserable conditions of the masses. The demonstration approached the British Police Station where the arrested men were detained, and threatened to release them by force. It was fired upon. Many were killed and more wounded. That was on the thirtieth of May, 1925. That incident caused the development of a great mass movement which opened up a new era in the history of the Chinese Revolution.

The massacre of May 30 was retaliated with a general strike in which all the workers of Shanghai participated. Students and small traders followed the workers. Schools and shops were closed down. The Foreign Settlement was placed under an economic blockade. Under the leadership of the working class, there developed a new form of struggle challenging the power of Imperialism. The police could not handle the situation. It was so very revolutionary that the Chinese troops could not be trusted to cope with it. Recruited from the destitute peasantry, they were susceptible to revolutionary propaganda carried on from the point of view of the exploited masses. The movement demanded abolition of the special privileges enjoyed by the foreigners. The basic political demand was supplemented by the demand for the freedom of assembly, release of the arrested leaders and suspension of the martial law. Simultaneously with the political demands, reflecting the interests of the entire people, the working class demanded higher wages and better living conditions. Alarmed by the gravity of the situation, Imperialism branded its mailed fist. In the

beginning of June, armed marines were landed from the imperialist battle-ships. The Chinese City was subjected to a reign of terror. The University and other public buildings were the headquarters of the movement. They ware occupied by armed forces. Meetings and demonstrations were dispersed, and firing on crowds became a usual practice.

What could not be achieved by the frontal attack of Imperialism, was done through the underhand tactics of splitting the ranks of the movement. Its driving force was the working class. Therefore, the policy of Imperialism was to isolate them, and then crush them completely. A successful struggle against the united forces of international Imperialism, willingly backed up by native allies, whose brutality knew no bounds, was conditional upon endless sacrifice and unflagging determination. The readiness to sacrifice and the determination to fight, however, were not shared equally by all the classes participating in the movement. As a covered attack upon the movement, the Electric Works owned by British capital declared that, owing to the strike, they could no longer supply power and light to the Chinese cotton mills which had been working during the strike. The patriotism of the bourgeoisie was put to test and found wanting. As soon as their pocket was touched, they opened negotiations with the foreigners for terminating the general strike. The big bourgeoisie betrayed the movement first. The petit-bourgeoisie followed. While the working class was thus left alone to fight the battle of China against foreign Imperialism, Chang Tso-lin sent down reinforcements under the command of his worthy son to establish peace and order in Shanghai. Thus betrayed by the mill-owners, bankers and big merchants, deserted also by the middle-class, with imperialist guns bristling all around, and in the teeth of the militarist barbarity, the proletariat carried on the struggle for three months. Their heroism, sacrifice and determination inspired the entire country. A great anti-imperialist tide surged over the land; the working class was found at the forefront of the movement everywhere.

One of the consequences of the events of Shanghai was the second Hongkong Strike, for the association with which the Nationalist Government of Canton was dubbed "red". Thus, as a part of the entire process, the movement in Shanghai, between May 30 and the beginning of October, did not end in a defeat. The struggle, begun by the Shanghai workers, was carried on farther by their comrades

situated in a better position. The Hongkong Strike added great strength to the Kuo Min Tang and the Nationalist Government. It once again demonstrated the power of the working class and its ability to mobilise the democratic masses in the struggle for national freedom.

When the news of the Shanghai shooting reached Canton, a great protest demonstration was organised. The masses assembled in front of the island of Shameen, on which the Anglo-French Settlement of Canton is situated. They were immediately fired upon by the Settlement Police. To retaliate, the domestic workers of the Settlement together with the workers of Hongkong went on strike. The tiny Settlement in the heart of Canton took on the aspects of a beleaguered fortress surrounded by barbed-wire fences and covered by a dozen gun-boats. Serious efforts were made to break the strike in Hongkong. Leaders were arrested, unions were closed down, and meetings were suppressed. Thereupon followed one of the most memorable events in the history of the Chinese struggle for freedom. All the Chinese workers left Hongkong. They were followed by the small traders, intellectuals and employees. The island was entirely cut off from the mainland. The strike and blockade lasted for fifteen months, during which period British trade in China was reduced by half. That was a severe blow to the power and prestige of Imperialism.

The whole movement was conducted from Canton by a Strike Committee. Since the movement was no longer a mere strike but an all-round struggle against Imperialism, the Strike Committee grew into a powerful political organ, compelling the Nationalist Government to move far in the direction of freeing itself from the domination of feudal-bourgeois elements. As a matter of fact, for a time, the Strike Committee exercised all the functions of a government. It did not supercede the Nationalist Government. As the militant organ of the working class in action, it wielded political power to the extent of dictating the policy of the Nationalist Government. For example, the function of the Workers' Guards (armed formation of the strikers) included "assistance to the Nationalist Government to suppress the counter-revolutionary movement, to defend the workers from robbery and violence of the bandits". Wherever and whenever the Nationalist Government vacillated in taking decisive measures, urgently needed in that critical moment, the Strike Committee stepped in and did the needful.

The Workers' Guards constituted the nucleus of the Nationalist

Army. In the beginning, the army of the Canton Government was largely inherited from the feudal Generals who had joined the Kuo Min Tang for their own reactionary purpose. The officers trained in the Wampoa Military Academy were still too few to transform the social character of that mercenary army. The soldiers remained attached to their Generals; they would fight for or against anyone at the command of the Generals. When thousands of strikers entered the army, the whole atmosphere changed. The new officers found a base of operation, so to say. The workers became the most active element in the army, and functioned as the revolutionary ferment. The peasant movement, which subsequently became the backbone of the revolution, also received a great impetus from the Hongkong Strike. All the strikers could not be employed at Canton. Thousands of them scattered into the surrounding villages, where they quickened the political life with their experience in an actual fight against Imperialism. They inspired the peasantry with the courage to stand up for the right to the fruits of their labour.

By the end of 1925, the nature of the nationalist movement had changed very greatly. That occurred mostly in consequence of the great sacrifice made and brave battles fought, often against overwhelming odds, by the working class. The fight against foreign Imperialism and native reaction was no longer carried on through futile conspiracies and discrediting combinations. It was now conducted by the masses, and the Kuo Min Tang was the leader of the revolutionary struggle.

In Shanghai the middle-class nationalists had failed to keep pace with the workers in the struggle against Imperialism. They deserted the movement as soon as it demanded some real sacrifice on their part. But the Hongkong Strike took place under different circumstances. The Nationalist Government was compelled to stand by the strikers. Otherwise, it would have forfeited all distinction from other cliques also aspiring to be the supreme authority of the country. It had come into existence with the avowed object of freeing China from foreign domination. Therefore, it could not possibly deny support to the working class when they were engaged in a heroic struggle against Imperialism. Had it deserted the workers in the midst of the struggle, as the bourgeoisie did in Shanghai, it would have been thoroughly discredited, and there would be no place for it in the history of the Chinese Revolution. Failing to enlist the confidence of the masses by

supporting the struggle initiated by them, the Nationalist Government would have been reduced to a position of extreme weakness, and consequently it could be easily overthrown by enemies all around waiting for a chance. Under those circumstances, the bourgeoisie were pushed in a way which they would have never travelled on their own initiative. That revolutionary push came from the great momentum gathered by the democratic mass movement from the events taking place ever since the thirtieth of May.

CHAPTER XIV

"RED" CANTON

In January 1923 in Shanghai, Sun Yat-sen met Joffe, the Envoy of the Soviet Republic. The year before, he had been driven out of Canton by the treachery of his feudal-militarist allies. His negotiations with the pro-Japanese Peking Government had also ended in nothing, owing to the downfall of the latter under the attack of the democratic mass movement. It was in that movement of despondency that Sun Yat-sen came in contact with revolutionaries. Under the impact of the democratic mass movement, the Kuo Min Tang was being driven towards a re-birth. With no initiative from its side, it was simply taken possession of by the growing forces of revolution. On the one hand, the democratic movement hailed Sun Yat-sen as its leader and, on the other hand, his conversations with the representatives of the Workers' Republic helped him to have a broader view of the national and international problems.

It was commonly believed that that historic meeting converted Sun Yat-sen to Communism. Since then all the enemies of the Chinese Revolution denounced him as an agent of Bolshevism. The truth, however, was entirely different. Joffe did not think of making a communist out of Sun Yat-sen. He could not have forgotten Lenin's wise advice not to paint nationalist revolutionaries red, to justify the Communists helping them. What Joffe tried to do was to explain to the leader of the Chinese nationalist movement that the attitude of the Proletarian State of Russian differed not only from that of Tzarist Russia, but also from the attitude of other foreign Powers. Having explained the reason of that difference, he reassured Sun Yat-sen that the Soviet Republic sympathised with the aspirations of the Chinese people and would give them every possible help

without any condition. While declaring the sympathy and promising the help of the Workers' Republic he, however, emphasised upon the necessity of the Chinese people themselves knowing how to fight effectively for their object. He told Sun Yat-sen what the latter should do if he desired to lead the Chinese people in the struggle for national freedom. He must have pointed out to Sun Yat-sen the futility of military combinations and political intrigues as weapons in a great revolutionary struggle. Those questionable weapons of his choice had just failed him once again. Therefore, Sun Yat-sen was open to conviction as regards their futility.

The conversation culminated in the publication of a joint statement. The principles of the subsequent alliance between the Proletarian State of Russia and the revolutionary National ist Government of China were laid down in that document. At the same time, it was made clear that neither did the one seek to convert the other to Communism, not did the latter accept it. The first clause of the joint statement was: "Dr. Sun Yat-sen holds that the Communist order or even the Soviet system cannot actually be introduced into China, because there do not exist here the conditions for the successful establishment of either Communism or Sovietism. This view is entirely shared by Mr. Joffe, who is further of the opinion that China's paramount and most pressing problem is to achieve national unification and attain full national independence, and regarding this task he assured Dr Sun Yat-sen that China has the warmest sympathy of the Russian people and can count on the support of Russia." Later on, while expounding his Three Principles, Sun Yat-sen defined his attitude towards Communism more categorically. He rejected the Marxian conception of social evolution, and expressed his faith in liberal reformism. Sun Yat-sen's disagreement with the fundamental principles of Marxism, and particularly his condemnation of class struggle, should be kept clearly in mind while studying the very interesting history of "Red" Canton.

The object of the revolutionary struggle waged between 1924 and 1926, with Canton as its base, was not to establish a proletarian dictatorship. If in that short period, Canton occasionally appeared to be "red", that was with a faint glow of Jacobinism. Sun Yat-sen was not converted to Communism, but the Kuo Min Tang, during those two years, developed Jacobinist tendencies. Canton was the centre of a revolutionary struggle for the creation of a democratic

Only in course of the struggle for the overthrow of Feudalism, and for the abolition of other pre-capitalist social relations, could the bourgeoisie lead the agrarian revolution. But Wang Chin-wei still remained an implacable opponent of class struggle. The Chinese bourgeoisie would not undertake a struggle for destroying feudal reaction; therefore, they could not assume the leadership of the insurgent peasantry engaged in the historical task of carrying through the agrarian revolution. That being the case, Wang Chin-wei's plan remained only a plan; it could not be put into practice-

In view of his readiness to sacrifice his party on the altar of militarism, the democratic gesture of the leader of petit-bourgeois radicalism was absurd. For years he had combated his rival, Chiang Kai-shek, with the slogan that the party authority should prevail over the government and the Military Command. Now he proposed that the party should be restored to its pristine purity, but at the same time abandoned the demand for the control of the state and Army by the party. That voluntary renunciation was necessary in order to placate *the* 'Tiilitarists, who had not the least desire to subordinate themselves to a clique of incompetent petit-bourgeois politicians. The projected government to dispute the authority of Nanking should not be subordinated to any control; it would be composed of such "talents" as Feng Yu-hsiang, Yen Hsi-shan and even Chang Hsue-Liang who, in their turn, would win over Wang Chin-wei in order to make themselves popular.

But all those counter-revolutionary combinations were presently disturbed by the growing forces of revolt on which they were to be" built. In the spring of 1930, the revolutionary peasants' army began to march towards the North through the provinces of Kiangsi and Hunan. The Government troops having been withdrawn to be engaged in the campaign in the North, the revolutionary force encountered very little resistance. Only July 28, they occupied the city of Changsha. Panic reigned in the middle-Yangtse region. Strong detachments of armed peasants marched also upon Nanchang and Hankow. Foreign battleships were again despatched up the Yangtse. Japanese and British marines landed at Hankow which was about to fall before the insurgents.

The resurgence of revolution drove underground the conflicts inside the counter-revolutionary camp. Still speaking about a Northern Alliance, Wang Chin-wei nevertheless hastened to declare that in

without any condition. While declaring the sympathy and promising the help of the Workers' Republic he, however, emphasised upon the necessity of the Chinese people themselves knowing how to fight effectively for their object. He told Sun Yat-sen what the latter should do if he desired to lead the Chinese people in the struggle for national freedom. He must have pointed out to Sun Yat-sen the futility of military combinations and political intrigues as weapons in a great revolutionary struggle. Those questionable weapons of his choice had just failed him once again. Therefore, Sun Yat-sen was open to conviction as regards their futility.

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China. The object of the revolutionary struggle was to destroy native reaction and overthrow foreign imperialist domination. In course of that struggle, for once in its chequered career, the Kuo Min Tang became necessarily involved in class struggle; but it was the class struggle which underlies the bourgeois revolution. In that revolutionary struggle, the Kuo Min Tang was fully supported by the working class, not only of the country, but of the entire world. The essential significance of the alliance with the Soviet Republic was that the revolutionary struggle of the Chinese Nationalist Government received the support of the international proletariat. The support was given on a clear understanding of the nature of the Chinese Revolution, and neither the Kuo Min Tang nor the Nationalist Government was expected to do anything more than they were historically required to do in pursuance of their programme.

The relation with the Soviet Republic gave occasion for all sorts of misunderstanding of the character of the Nationalist Government of Canton. Owing to that relation, all Chinese Nationalists, inclined towards revolution, came to be branded as "Bolshevik agents". The relation, however, was established on very clearly denned principles. The Chinese nationalists were attracted by the Soviet Government not owing to any sympathy for its social ideals. They were impressed by its actual deeds of friendship towards their country. They did not even understand that the sympathy and friendly acts of the Soviet Republic towards China and other subject nations were determined by its social ideals. To offer the Chinese people help in their struggle for freedom, irrespective of their attitude towards Communism, was neither a deceptive policy nor a clever diplomatic move on the part of the Soviet Republic. Nor was it sentimental humanitarianism. The policy was determined by the Marxian understanding of history. The struggle of the subject people for national freedom is a part of the greater world-wide struggle for the realisation of Socialism. The Russian Soviet Republic represented the first conquest of the working class as a world force. It was, therefore, vitally interested in the struggle for the freedom of the subject nationalities. Its interest was not that of a National State. It acted as an organ of political power wielded by the working class of the entire world. Its friendship and support for the Chinese Nationalist Government were not conditional upon the latter's acceptance of Communism, because any such acceptance would be palpably hypocritical. Whatever might be the

attitude of the Chinese nationalists, the success of their struggle would be a step forward towards the real isation of Communism on the world scale.

Communism is not a heaven hankered by visionaries. Eventually, human society will reach Communism as a stage in the process of its evolution. On the way, it must pass through various stages. The struggle to attain these intervening stages is objectively a part of the struggle for Communism. With this dialectical understanding of history, the Communists hold that the working class must support the subject peoples in their fight for national freedom.

The establishment of Communism is conditional upon a minimum development of the forces of production. The abolition of social and political conditions, which prevent the development of the forces of production to the level where the establishment of Communism becomes necessary and possible, therefore, advances the cause of Communism. Such conditions obtain in countries subjected to colonial exploitation. By virtue of having attained a high stage of capitalist production earlier than others, some nations establish their domination over the rest of the world. That is Imperialism. Under imperialist domination, productive forces in the colonial countries could not develop freely. By holding a major portion of human society in a backward stage, Imperialism became the greatest enemy of Communism. The downfall of Imperialism, therefore, is the first condition for a successful struggle for the realisation of Communism. The struggle of the subject peoples for national liberation thus becomes an integral part of the international struggle for Communism. For overthrowing Imperialism, all those exploited and oppressed by it should participate in a joint action. The proletarian struggle in the capitalist countries should be co-ordinated with the movement for national liberation in the colonies. Both are to be regarded as complementary factors in the self-same struggle for the eventual establishment of the World Socialist Commonwealth.

The Marxian interpretation of history is not fatalistic. The capitalist mode of production creates conditions for Communism. But the latter does not grow painlessly out of the former, [n one period of history, the capitalist mode of production brings human society out of the chaos of feudalism; eventually, it loses its progressive character and itself becomes a bulwark of reaction. Under capitalism, the means of production develop tremendously. In course of

time, the limit is reached. No further development is possible within the bounds of the capitalist mode of production. At the moment, it is in the interest of capitalism to check the very progress which it has previously promoted. Therefore, further progress becomes conditional upon the liberation of the means of production from the fetters of private ownership. Technical development having socialised production, it becomes necessary, for general welfare, to socialise the ownership of the means of production. The ownership of the means of production places a particular class in the position of power and privileges. That class is naturally opposed to the disappearance of its ownership and the socialisation of the means of production. It puts up a stubborn resistance to the transformation of the existing social order. The common ownership of the means of socialised production is necessary for the continued progress of human society. But that cannot take place without a struggle. In order to build the capitalist social order, the bourgeoisie overthrew the feudal aristocracy from its position of power and privilege. The working class must do the same thing with the bourgeoisie for freeing the forces of production from a system of ownership which has ceased to have any social usefulness.

In the historic struggle for overthrowing the bourgeoisie from the position of power, the working class must ally itself with all the forces antagonistic to its enemy. Modern Imperialism being the highest form of capitalism, forces operating against it are auxiliaries in the working class struggle against the bourgeoisie. Subject nationalities are held by Imperialism in varying grades of social backwardness. Therefore, their fight for liberation involves classes not directly interested in Communism, and in earlier stages it is led usually by social elements consciously hostile to Communism. That was the case with the Chinese nationalist movement in 1923, when it came into contact with the Soviet Republic.

The social background of the movement was still predominantly bourgeois, the working class being still an auxiliary factor; the leadership, as personified by Sun Yat-sen, was decidedly opposed to Communism. Nevertheless, the Soviet Republic offered its support. As the victorious vanguard of the international proletariat, it could not do otherwise. The historic importance of the National Revolution in the colonial countries is its anti-imperialist character. Its social composition is of secondary consideration. In so far as it contributes

to the downfall of Imperialism, it helps the proletarian revolution. That being the case, there was no attempt on the part of the Soviet Republic to convert the Kuo Min Tang to Communism as the condition for the alliance between the two. The programme of the bourgeois democratic nationalist revolution—the overthrow of foreign Imperialism and destruction of native reaction—was a broad enough basis for the alliance.

In the past, bourgeois revolutions had always received the support of the toiling masses. The working class was the driving force of the bourgeois revolution even when it created conditions favourable for a more intensive form of class exploitation. In the present period, a bourgeois revolution can be accomplished only as the immediate prelude to a more far-reaching social transformation. Therefore, it is bound to be still more dependent upon the action of the working class. In the present period of capitalist decay, a bourgeois revolution is not likely to produce the same consequences as previously, when the capitalist mode of production was an instrument of progress. A revolution places in power a particular class which, in the given period, leads the forces of social progress, whose triumph quickens the material and cultural advance of society as a whole. Capitalism has long ceased to be an agency of progress. To-day, it is a force of reaction, blocking human progress in every direction, throughout the world. If it has that significance in the centres of capitalist production, it is incomparably more so on the periphery of the capitalist world, namely, in the colonial countries. The nationalist revolution in the subject countries only represents the destructive aspect of the bourgeois revolution. It is bourgeois revolution because, in the struggle against Imperialism, it destroys pre-capitalist conditions hitherto preserved for the exigencies of colonial exploitation. But on the positive side, it is bound to transcend the limits of the bourgeois revolution. Objectively and essentially, being a fight against capitalist reaction, it is not likely to end by enthroning its enemy. The success of the nationalist revolution in China would mean a severe blow to Imperialism. Capitalism grew out of the debris of feudalism; but it is not likely to resurrect out of its own ruins.

Of course, here again, the objective possibilities cannot be fatalistically relied upon. The subjective factor must play the decisive role. The last word regarding the future of China, as well as of any other subject country, belongs to the domestic masses But for

the presence of the proletariat, much more conscious of their class interest than in the past, the bourgeois revolution might possibly set up a capitalist order of society in the backward countries of the colonial world. The situation, however, happens to be different. In the bourgeois nationalist revolutions in those countries, the working class is a dominating factor. The Chinese nationalist movement established friendly relations with the Soviet Republic just at the moment it was developing into a revolutionary struggle owing to the active participation of the working class. The nationalist bourgeoisie betrayed the revolution as soon as it became evident that its victory would not place them in power. But the betrayal of the nationalist revolution did not stop the democratic revolution. In spite of the treachery of the bourgeoisie, it will clear away the relics of pre-capitalist social relations and introduce higher means of production, but not as the basis of a bourgeois social order. Its success will mark the beginning of a process of social reconstruction leading directly up to the establishment of Socialism.

Canton between 1924 and 1926 was "red", bacause it was the scene of events marking a radical turn in the development of the Chinese Revolution. The turn was towards Jacobinism which historically is the fore-runner of Bolshevism, even when it is the banner of a successful bourgeois revolution. Already at the close of the eighteenth century, Jacobinism was a fore-runner of Bolshevism, although the two were separated by more than a hundred years. Developing in alliance with Bolshevism, after it had triumphed in one part of the world and was staring the rest challengingly in the face, Jacobinism could no longer be a successful midwife of capitalism. To-day, it would be the ominous shadow of Bolshevism cast ahead, not more than a hundred years, but only a few, Canton will always occupy a proud place in the history of the Chinese Revolution as the scene of the short-lived Chinese Jacobinism which thrived under the shadow of Sun Yat-senism mocking at its reactionary character.

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Sun Yat-sen did not take the friendly offer of the Soviet Republic very seriously in the beginning. His eyes were still riveted upon the capitalist world. Throughout 1923, he continued his secret efforts to get arms from America or England for setting up a military government in the South. Failing in that quarter, he even approached

defeated Germany for help. But presently things took a new turn. The Soviet Republic sent a new Ambassador to China. He made the offer of friendship publicly to the Chinese people. In a banquet given to the new Ambassador, the Foreign Minister of the Peking Government expressed the hope that "the new regime in Russia will follow the noble example of America in its relation with China". Karakhan did not miss that golden opportunity for exposing before the people how survile were the Chinese bourgeoisie in their relation with the imperialist Powers. In his reply, he said: "I reject decidedly the honour of treading the path of American policy in China. Russia will never claim the right of extra-territoriality, nor establish Courts of Administration on Chinese territory." That frank declaration of Soviet policy in China was followed up by another speech of the Ambassador at the National University of Peking. Addressing the young radical intellectuals, he frankly said that the salvation of their country must be worked out through a revolutionary movement, and that without the active participation of the masses, there could be no success. He concluded his speech with the following declaration: "We have driven Imperialism out of our country; but only then shall we be satisfied when there will be not a single oppressed nation in the world. When you will be strong enough to start the battle against Imperialism, which is oppressing your country, you may be assured of the sympathy with your cause of the people of the Soviet Union."

The intellectual vanguard of the Chinese people saw a new vision. Sun Yat-sen did not have the courage to take the hand of friendship stretched out by the Soviet Union. But the young radical intellectuals were not slow to do so enthusiastically. The democratic nationalist movement became inspired with sympathy for the Soviet Union. The powerful Russian Empire had in the past been the most feared enemy of China. Now an equally powerful friend had taken the place of that dreaded enemy. China was no longer without a sincere friend in her international relations. An alliance with the Soviet Republic became a slogan of the popular movement.

Meanwhile, Sun Yat-sen had returned to C anton to revert to futile military intrigues. His efforts to secure help either in America or England or Germany had proved fruitless. Consequently, he had no hope of winning the support of one or other army chief. On the other hand, a revolutionary alliance between the democratic mass

movement of China and the Soviet Republic was being formed over the head of the Kuo Min Tang. The accomplished fact could no longer be ignored. Sun Yat-sen at last made up his mind to risk a revolutionary alliance, nationally as well as internationally. Rebuffed by Anglo-American Imperialism, he was obliged to fall back upon the offered friendship of the Soviet Republic; abandoned by the cowardly bourgeoisie and repeatedly betrayed by the feudal-militarists, at home he had no other alternative than to come closer to the revolutionary masses. Class prejudice had so long held him back from that alliance, although political opportunism had been tempting him for some time in that direction. He was ultimately forced into that relation, because the Chinese masses demanded it. After the declarations of Karakhan, the Kuo Min Tang could not possibly ignore the friendship of the Soviet Republic without forfeiting the claim to the leadership of the Chinese people. The alliance between the Nationalist Government of Canton and the Soviet Republic was not an opportunist diplomatic relation It was brought about by the will of the masses. It was a united front of the proletariat as a world force and an oppressed people in the fight against Imperialism.

Even when he finally requested the Soviet Ambassador to send to Canton a representative for establishing practical relations, Sun Yat-sen wrote: "I affirm that no criticism of the order or ideas, for which you stand, can or will prevent me from holding with you that the real interest of our respective countries demands the formulation of a common policy which shall enable us to live on terms of equality with other Powers, and free from the political and economic servitude imposed under an international system resting on force and working through the method of economic Imperialism." So, on the point of entering into an alliance with the Soviet Republic, Sun Yat-sen once again made it clear that he had no sympathy for Communism.

Since the Kuo Min Tang came under the revolutionary influence of the democratic mass movement, its social composition had been undergoing a change. Consequently, its political vision had also been growing broader. The revolutionary union of the radical petit-bourgeoisie and the working class had pushed the opportunist combination of bourgeois politicians and feudal-militarists to the background. All those reasons made the reorganisation of the Kuo Min Tang inevitable. The fact that actual reorganisation was delayed until 1924 proved that the leaders could not keep pace with the masses.

The latter strode ahead in seven-league boots, while the former were woefully slow to come out of their old ruts. The events at Canton during the year 1924 showed why the leaders of the Kuo Min Tang had been so reluctant to travel the road they were finally forced to take.

The movement was at the parting of ways. A revolutionary orientation, nationally and internationally, was sure to create a crisis inside the Kuo Min Tang. It was financed by the reactionary compra-dore bourgeoisie; the feudal militarists supported it for their reactionary purposes. A revolutionary orientation would forfeit the Kuo Min Tang the support of both those classes. In order to travel the new way, under the pressure of the masses, and as the leader of a revolutionary democratic movement, it must break with its disreputable past as regards organisation as well as ideologically. But even then it would not make a decisive choice. It still sought to ride on two horses, a dangerous exploit in which it eventually broke its neck.

At last the reorganisation took place upon the background of a developing class struggle inside the ranks of the Kuo Min Tang. True to his principle of avoiding class struggle, Sun Yat-sen attempted to reorganise his party on a platform of compromise between conflicting class interests. In his heart of hearts, he still relied upon the feudal militarists and the patriarchal old school officials rather than on the masses. In order to satisfy those questionable allies, he sacrifice political democracy. At the behest of the bourgeoisie, he committed the Kuo Min Tang to a social reformism which placed it on the road to counter-revolution. The very resolutions of the Reorganisation Conference contained the germs of the counter-revolutionary policy adopted by the Kuo Min Tang later on. The policy formulated in them was indeed an advance upon the past, particularly, in respect of the attitude towards Imperialism. But so long as it was based upon reactionary social principles, political radicalism could not go far. Then, even the political radicalism of the Kuo Min Tang was defective. It did not touch the internal situation. Confusion was the main feature of the policy adopted at the Reorganisation Conference. And the confusion was a smoke-screen for reaction.

The Kuo Min Tang was reorganised under the pressure of the masses. But the pressure failed to be decisive. The pressure was brought to bear upon the situation through the Communist Party. It was still very young, politically inexperienced and ideologically

immature. It failed to appreciate the real nature of the principles of Sun Yat-sen. Instead of insisting upon the adoption of a clear programme of bourgeois democratic revolution, the Communists were carried away by the deceptive ultra-radicalism of the petit-bourgeoisie. They believed that there could be such a thing as a superclass party and a super-class State. They allowed the ambiguous category "people" to push classes to the background. They made the capital mistake of believing that the way to proletarian dictatorship was open simply by the rejection of parliamentary democracy.

When the working class rejects parliamentary democracy, they set before themselves the immediate goal of a revolutionary dictatorship as the means for establishing a higher form of democracy. But the perspective could not be the same when a different class is concerned with the situation. In that case, the rejection of parliamentary democracy is a reactionary step. It opens the way to dictatorship, but an entirely different nature, that of the reactionary classes.

The mistake committed by the Communists in the beginning of their relation with the Kuo Min Tang affected the development of the revolution in the subsequent period. It was a mistake to believe that, with the reactionary principles of Sun Yat-sen, a State could be created which would be the organ of revolutionary dictatorship. The correct beginning should have been a critical approach to those principles. The democratic mass movement provided a broad social basis for an attack upon social reaction masquerading as political radicalism. The working class could have pushed the petit-bourgeoisie in a decisive struggle against social reaction. In that case, Jacobinism would not degenerate into Sun Yat-senism. It was not possible to steal a march towards proletarian dictatorship. The road lay through bourgeois democracy. The length of the road would be determined by the conditions, national as well as international, in which the revolution was to take place. Under the given situation, the road was very likely to be short in China. Nevertheless, it had to be travelled. The radicalism of the petit-bourgeoisie appeared to be a desire to jump over that unavoidable stage. It was deceptive. It represented reluctance to take up a really revolutionary struggle. The tragedy of the Chinese Revolution is that the Communists were deceived by the radicalism of the petit-bourgeois nationalists. Its reactionary nature should have been clear in the light of Marxism.

The triumph of a reactionary petit-bourgeois ideology, how-

ever, did not spare the Kuo Min Tang rude shocks of reality. Immediately after the reorganisation, there developed a fierce class struggle, defying the principle of a super-class State. The Communists had committed previous mistakes. The Kuo Min Tang had not been forced to adopt a clear programme of bourgeois democratic revolution. Nevertheless, it had come in close contact with the masses. The exigencies of the situation had committed it to a fight against foreign Imperialism. That could not be done effectively without attacking native reaction simultaneously. The old guard of the party representing the patriarchal literati, old-school officials, feudal-militarists and the compradore bourgeoisie, were alarmed by the perspectives of development. They had put up a stubborn opposition to the admission of the Communists into the Kuo Min Tang. They had been defeated in that first round of the internal struggle. In the years preceding the Reorganisation Conference, the social basis of the Kuo Min Tang had broadened. It could no longer be completely controlled by the old guard. The Reorganisation Conference revealed the alarming change in the alignment of forces. The old guard anticipated the danger and decided to act before it was

too late.

The Communist Party provided them with the scarecrow. The mistake committed by the Communists supplied them a political platform. Tdey seized upon the undemocratic features of the resolutions of the Reorganisation Conference, and interpreted them as representing the plan of the Communists to set up a dictatorship under the domination of Bolshevik Russia. An ill-considered action on the part of the Communists thus enabled the reactionaries to appear as the defenders of democracy and opponents of foreign

domination.

Towards the end of August 1924, that is, hardly half a year after the Reorganisation Conference, anti-Communist demonstrations took place in the streets of Canton; large quantities of leaflets were distributed inciting the citizens to rise up in arms against the Communists; and they were accused of having usurped the power of government. At that time, the Nationalist Government was still composed mostly of the Old Guard. It was suspected that several members of the Government were behind the anti-Communist movement. The suspicion was strengthened by the failure of the Government to take any measure against the demonstrators

inciting an armed

insurrection. But the situation could not be allowed to drift. The working class again took the initiative. A general strike was declared. Thereupon the Government acted promptly, under the pressure of the Old Guard. It ordered immediate termination of the general strike, and the city was placed under martial law. The workers refused to surrender the streets to the counter-revolutionaries, whose activities were not to be checked by any government action. Under the pressure of the masses, the petit-bourgeois radical members of the Kuo Min Tang stiffened up their back. The anti-strike orders were withdrawn. The Old Guard suffered a defeat in the first encounter.

Sun Yat-sen's son, Sun Fo, was then the Mayor of Canton. He was the leader of the anti-Communist group in the Kuo Min Tang. In a few days, all the leaders of that group, together with Sun Fo, left Canton. Defeated there, the reactionaries withdrew to a safer place from where they could mount a counter-offensive. The merchants connected with foreign banks organised themselves into an armed militia, financed and otherwise supplied from Hongkong. In October 1924 there was an armed insurrection in Canton. Previously, during the Hongkong seamen's strike in 1922, the Nationalist Government had been driven out by a band of armed reactionaries acting under the instigation and with the help of British Imperialism. But since then, the position of the Nationalist Government had been greatly strengthened with the support of the masses. It was no longer entirely dependent upon the mercenary troops of unreliable Generals. With the support of armed workers, it could easily deal with the Fascist "Paper Tiger" revolt in 1924. That victory increased the prestige of the Nationalist Government in the eyes of the people. It was a victory against the combined forces of native reaction and foreign Imperialism. It was a definite steps towards the realisation of the programme of the Kuo Min Tang.

While reaction suffered a defeat in Canton, the political situation throughout the country was developing rapidly. The ruling classes were alarmed by the stormy development of the mass movement. They made another effort to terminate the civil war, so that a united front could be presented against the danger of the impending revolution. In the beginning of 1925, the Peking Government proposed to call a conference with the object of unifying the country under one central authority. The Kuo Min Tang was also invited

to the proposed conference. Upon the defeat of the Old Guard, the petit-bourgeois left wing had become predominating in the councils of the Kuo Min Tang. Although Sun Yat-sen himself was in favour of accepting the invitation, the majority of his followers were opposed to it. Nevertheless, it was generally agreed that Sun Yat-sen personally should visit Peking. His departure from Canton gave the left wing more freedom to act. Canton became "red" in a faint glow of Jacobinism, only after the departure and subsequent death of Sun Yat-sen.

The proposal for the conference was supported by the right-wing leaders of the Kuo Min Tang, who had left Canton after their defeat in September 1924. They assembled in Peking when Sun Yat-sen arrived there. Soon after his arrival at Peking, Sun Yat-sen fell ill, and died on March 12, 1925. Upon his death, the right-wing leaders declared themselves to be his legitimate successors to the leadership of the party They took possession of the headquarters of the party at Shanghai, and disputed the authority of the Central Committee at Canton. Just a year after its reorganisation, and just when it had become the leader of a powerful mass movement, the Kuo Min Tang split along the line of class antagonism within its own ranks. The conflict of class interests had grown too sharp to keep it together in the old loose formation. The right-wing was composed of the representatives of the big bourgeoisie and the feudal aristocracy. It took its stand on the platform of a fight against Communism and Russian influence. Taking their cue from the principles of the dead leader, the right-wingers denounced class struggle, declared that Communism could have no place in China, and condemned the Communists as the enemies of Chinese nationalism. They called themselves the "White Kuo Min Tang" in contrast to the left wing, denounced as "red revolutionaries". They advocated rupture of the relation with the "bloody Bolsheviks", and favoured an alliance with the "democratic Powers of the West" in a fight against the Communist menace.

Encouraged by the action of the right wing, the reactionaries again raised their head in Canton. As soon as the news of the death of Sun Yat-sen reached Canton, there bagan a scramble for power among the various cliques inside the Kuo Min Tang. One of Sun Yat-sen's old-school followers, General Tang Chih-yao, proclaimed his intention to become the head of the Government. He sent a

telegram to the right-wing headquarters announcing that be had assumed the office. He also came to terms with Chen Chiu-ming who, since is defeat at the end of 1923, had taken to banditry ravaging the Eastern districts of Kwangtung.

The Canton Kuo Min Tang challenged the pretension of the reactionary General and denounced him as an enemy of the revolution. But the situation was not only complicated, it was dangerous. Nationalist ranks were still infested with the forces of the enemies of the revolution. The army of the Nationalist Government was still commanded by reactionaries. While all the faithful troops were away to fight the robber-chief Chen Chiu-ming, a large number of mercenary soldiers, under the command of Tang Chih-yao and his trusted lieutenants, was garrisoned at Canton. The Government itself was headed by Hu Han-min — a representative of the compradore bourgeoisie.

Canton was in a situation similar to that of Paris at the end of May 1793. The revolution could not be saved unless all the Girondists were ruthlessly removed from power. Like Paris, Canton was also glaring focus of the fight going on all over the country between the *Sansculottes* and vested interests. The revolution was standing with her back to the wall. Only resolute action could save her. In that crisis, a step towards revolutionary dictatorship was taken. The Central Executive Committee of the party assumed decisive power. Measures were taken for creating the nucleus of a really revolutionary army. The cadets of the newly established Wampoa Military Academy and the raw recruits trained there by revolutionary nationalist officers served the purpose. That small nucleus of a reliable military force, supported by the revolutionary workers, took the mercenary troops by surprise. The authority of the Nationalist Government was reestablished at Canton. Then came the decisive blow. By an order of the Central Executive Committee, 124 leading members of the party suspected of right-wing sympathy and complicity with counter-revolution were expelled from the party. Not only was the open attack of counter-revolution repulsed: there were far-reaching readjustments inside the party itself. It was almost entirely freed from reactionary control. Although Hu Han-min still remained the formal head of the Government, for all practical purposes, he was superceded by Liang Chung-hai and Wang Chin-wei. The supreme power was vested in those two men who, for some time, were to

play the parts respectively of Marat and Robespierre in the Chinese Revolution.

The victory of the left wing was celebrated in a resolution passed by the Cental Executive Committee of the Kuo Min Tang on May 23, 1925. It was decided to break off all connection with the government in Peking. Unification of the country was no longer to be attempted through negotiations with reactionary cliques or opportunist alliances. It must be realised through a revolutionary struggle; and the Nationalist Government of Canton assumed the leadership of that struggle.

While still swearing by the political testament of Sun Yat-sen, the Kuo Min Tang practically repudiated the policy which he had pursued all his life. Only three months ago, in spite of the opposition of his more radical followers, he had gone to Peking with the object of coming to terms with the warring reactionary cliques. That last act of political opportunism on the part of Sun Yat-sen was repudiated by the Canton Kuo Min Tang by the resolution of May, 1925. At last, it definitely committed itself to a resolute fight against reaction. It was declared in the same resolution "that the only government in the world to-day with which the Kuo Min Tang can work hand in hand is that of Soviet Russia, which has always been in sympathy with the aspirations of the Chinese people. Consequently, the party should devote its efforts to secure the co-operation of Soviet Russia for the emancipation of the Chinese people and the reform of the Chinese Republic". Another tradition of Sun Yat-sen was thus discarded only two months after his death in a meeting of his followers, which was opened ceremoniously by paying homage to his venerable memory.

Having resolved at last to lead a revolution, the Kuo Min Tang could not continue the futile policy of seeking the support of "Western democracies" who had all along obstructed that resolution much more effectively than native reaction. Even after he was disillusioned about the sympathy of the Western democracies, and realised the importance of an alliance with the Soviet Republic, Sun Yat-sen could not make up his mind to cross the Rubicon. He flirted with the idea of an alliance with the Soviet Republic, while not entirely abandoning the hope of finding a more preferable ally. Even on his death-bed, he entertained the illusion. In his political testament, he recommended to his followers "co-operation with those

nations which treat us on the basis of equality". Evidently, he was not convinced that the Soviet Republic was the only party from whom, under the given conditions of the world, China could expect such a treatment. But his younger followers were less connected with compromising traditions, and therefore were more susceptible to revolutionary influence. They did not inherit his illusions about the Western democracies, and therefore share his hesitation about the Soviet Republic. They were obliged to break away from the traditions of their beloved leader, because it was no longer possible to vacillate. One must choose side, or go down. Events taking place throughout the country, since the beginning of the year, had once again exposed the true face of Imperialism. Counter-revolutionary conspiracies inside the ranks of the Kuo Min Tang had brought it home to the left-wing leaders that they must either fight resolutely, or be beaten.

The Chinese Girondists protested against the developments at Canton. They denounced the Canton Committee of the Kuo Min Tang as an instrument of Bolshevism. All "true Kuo Min Tang men who desired to be faithful to the principles of the dead leader" were called upon to rally round the right wing in the fight against the "Bolshevik usurpers of Canton". The Canton Committee retorted by expelling another group of right-wing sympathisers. That group included Robert Norman, the American Adviser to the Nationalist Government. He was replaced by the Russian Communist, Michael Borodin, who had come to Canton in the middle of 1923 on the invitation of Sun Yat-sen.

The development in Canton was not an isolated event. It reflected the situation throughout the country. Ever since the beginning of the year, the working class had been engaged in a general attack upon Imperialism. Originating as strikes to enforce economic demands, the movement had assumed a political character disclosing the close co-operation between foreign Imperialism and native reaction as against all the forces of progress. The movement had led up to the Shanghai massacre on May 30, and the subsequent events. The general strike sweeping the entire country as protest against the massacre of Shanghai workers and students assumed the acutest political form in the boycott of Hongkong. In course of that heroic struggle against powerful British Imperialism, the working class became the most dominating factor of the situation, influencing the

councils of the Kuo Min Tang and policies of the Nationalist Government. The actual leader of the struggle was not the Nationalist Government nor the Kuo Min Tang; it was the Strike Committee set up to enforce the boycott of Hongkong.

The relation of the Strike Committee and the Nationalist Government of Canton was somewhat analogous to that between the Paris Commune and the National Assembly in the earlier part of 1793. On both the occasions, the former was the driving force of the revolution. The Canton Strike Committee was the General Staff commanding a well-disciplined, partly armed, army of over one hundred thousand workers. It supported the left wing of the Kuo Min Tang in its fight against the counter-revolutionary Old Guard. The reactionary right-wing leaders were driven out of Canton; but their agents still sat in the inner circles of the party and the Nationalist Government. Sun Fo, for example, returned to Canton. Thanks to his parentage, he could easily hide his real political complexion.

Like all boycotts, the boycott of Hongkong also proved to be a double-edged weapon. Dealing a severe blow to the purse, power and prestige of British Imperialism, it affected the interests of the Chinese merchants also. They tried to bring pressure on the Kuo Min Tang and the Nationalist Government for ending the boycott. The counter-pressure was exerted by the Strike Committee. But for its resolute leadership, the Nationalist Government would have given in to the pressure of the merchants; the petit-bourgeois left wing would have surrendered to the feudal-bourgeois elements. The right wing leaders, assembled in the so-called "Western Hill Conference", again declared the Canton Committee illegal. They were representing the big bourgeoisie, and counted upon the support of foreign Imperialism. On the other hand, the robber-chief, Chen Chiu-mmg. again began his operations against Canton, amply supplied with the sinews of war from Hongkong. In that critical moment, the petit bourgeois radicals could rely only upon the support of the working class. The Strike Committee placed at the disposal of the Nationalist Government the services of a hundred thousand disciplined men, determined for a revolutionary fight. In those circumstances, the left wing could not but make concessions to the masses. Not only in Canton, but throughout the province under the jurisdiction of the Nationalist Government, workers and peasants were organised *by* the

Communists to defend and promote their immediate interests. The number of organised workers and peasants rose to hundreds of thousands. Class struggle developed side by side with the struggle for national liberation. Native reaction was attacked simultaneously with foreign Imperialism. The peasants opened attack upon Feudalism. Trade-unions dictated terms to the capitalists. In the countryside, political power was practically captured by the Peasant Unions which were identical with the local Kuo Min Tang organisations. There was a great hue and cry against "Bolshevism". The Nationalist Government was denounced as a "Soviet Dictatorship". The right-wing leaders, who were still at Canton, echoed the cry of the counterrevolutionaries, and endeavoured to persuade the party to change its policy and the Government to punish the Communists and break off the relation with Russia. Some more of them were thereupon forced to leave Canton. Sun Fo was among them. The classical type of a petit-bourgeois radical, Wang Chin-wei, replaced the representative of the compradore bourgeoisie, Hu Han-min, not only as the leader of the party, but also as the head of the Government.

The revolution, however, was just beginning. Reaction was still far from being beaten. Before long, it again raised its ugly head. Thanks to his long association with Sun Yat-sen, Wang Chin-wei was the formal leader of the left wing. Sun Yat-sen had nominated him as his successor. But the real leader of Chinese Jacobinism was Liao Chung-hai. As Minister of Finance of the Nationalist Government, he entirely dominated the situation. He was a staunch supporter of the alliance with the Soviet Republic. It was on his initiative that the creation of a revolutionary army had begun. He recognised the hundred thousand Workers' Guard as the most reliable and soundest nucleus of a really revolutionary army. He was the political director of the military forces of the Nationalist Government. In that capacity, be was the virtual Commander of the Wampoa Military Academy. Naturally, it was he who should be selected as the first object of counter-revolutionary attack. He was assassinated in August 19, 1925. It was not difficult to trace the origin of the crime. Hu Han-min's hand was clearly visible behind it. He had managed to stay in the inner circle of the Nationalist Government with the object of checking its revolutionary actions. Liao Chung-hai was his most powerful opponent The left wing was staggered by the assassination of its leader. The blow was unexpected. It threatened to demoralise

the left wing. But the working class again took the initiative and pushed the petit-bourgeois radicals forward in a revolutionary struggle. They demanded revenge for Liao Chung-hai's death. The entire democratic masses supported the demand. Hu Han-min was banished from Canton. With the expulsion of the last of the Girondists from the Nationalist Government, yet another step was taken towards a revolutionary dictatorship.

Liao Chung-hai was the chosen victim of counter-revolution, because he advocated the policy of ameliorating the economic conditions of the workers and peasants as the means of mobilising the masses under the banner of the revolution. As if to honour and commemorate its martyred leader, the Kuo Min Tang gave a more definite shape to the "labour and peasant policy" of the party. That was done by the Second Congress of the party held in January 1926. The Reorganisation Conference had vaguely referred to the masses, and talked of the necessity of enlisting their support; but it had not adopted any definite programme regarding the immediate economic interests of the workers and peasants. During the intervening period of two years, the masses had fought in the frontline of the struggle against foreign Imperialism and native-reaction. In course of that fight, and by virtue of the leading part it played therein, the working class acquired considerable political power. But the burning social questions were left untouched in the Kuo Min Tang programme. The roots of reaction remained intact. Increasing revolutionary activity on the part of the working class, and the widespread political awakening of the peasantry only sharpened class antagonism, and precipitated a severe political crisis.

In that crisis, the youthful Communist Party committed another mistake which subsequently proved fatal for the revolution. The first mistake had been to refrain from exposing the reactionary significance of Sun Yat-senism while approaching the Kuo Min Tang with the proposal for the formation of a united nationalist democratic front against foreign Imperialism and native reaction. The second mistake of the Communist Party was the failure to exercise the political power acquired in course of the struggle. The Workers' Guard, created by the Strike Committee during the Hongkong boycott, and which served the Nationalist Government as the most dependable military force in the fight against armed reaction, was allowed to be pushed aside and gradually emasculated. The peasants were organised

in mass formations. But they were not led to enforce their demands irrespective of whatever the Nationalist Government said or did. Supported by the democratic masses, the Peasant Unions practically ruled the country-side. They were the basic units of the Kuo Min Tang, being practically identical with its local organisations. They were under Communist leadership. They were not allowed to attack feudal-patriarchal privileges. The Communists believed it to be wise tactics to stay the attack upon Feudalism until that might be sanctioned by the petit-bourgeois radicals. That was a grave mistake. The Nationalist Government was entirely dependent upon the working class, because the Workers' Guard v, as the only reliable striking power at its command. In that situation, it would have been obliged to sanction any revolutionary action of the peasantry, had the Communists led them in a wholesale attack upon Feudalism. The Nationalist Government itself would have consolidated its position by sanctioning the revolutionary action of the peasantry. Its relation with the masses would have become organic; the victory of the bourgeois democratic revolution would have been guaranteed. The failure of the Communist Party to act with courage and determination in that opportune moment was responsible for the regrettable fact that the elimination from power of the feudal-bourgeois right wing happened to be only superficial. As long as its social basis was not exterminated, its political eclipse could be only temporary.

The Western Hill Conference of the right wing, even after the assassination of Liao Chung-hai, had denounced the Canton Kuo Min Tang as traitors to the principles of Sun Yat-sen, because of its relation with the Communists. Therefore, the relation with the Communist Party became the main issue in the Second Kuo Min Tang Congress. The attack of the right wing was retorted by emphasising upon the necessity of co-operation with the Communist Party The Communists openly participated in the Congress, and played a prominent role in its deliberations. They were not only granted full right of membership of the Kuo Min Tang, but a few of them were elected to the highest organs of the party. The Communists considered that to be a substantial victory over the counter-revolutionary right wing, and did not think it to be tactically wise to raise other issues- The vital questions of social revolution were allowed to be perfunctorily dealt with by the Second Congress. The real issues were confused by radical phrases concerning the relation with the

Communist Party. The latter were deceived. The resolution on the "Labour and Peasant Question" was couched in the following vague language: "The success of all revolutions must depend on the extensive participation of the masses; the labour and peasant elements are specially indispensable. The failure of the Nationalist Revolution in the past was due to the fact that in it only the intellectual class participated, so that there was no broad basis for it, and the force was small. In the Nationalist Revolution to-day and to-morrow, we must preach its significance in the farm and in the factory, and organise these classes in the struggle against Imperialism". The resolution not only ignored the immediate economic demands of the workers and peasants: it even avoided the basic task of the bourgeois revolution. The importance of the masses was recognised, and it was proposed to enlist their support, but their interests were entirely ignored. In that fateful moment, the Communists should have remembered Plekhanov's famous injunction: "The revolution for the masses, not the masses for the revolution."

Not until the end of the year did the Kuo Min Tang programme include some definite redress of the burning grievances of the workers and peasants. But even then it was petty reformism, dominated by the ambiguous principle of "People's Livelihood". The peasantry were promised twenty-five per cent reduction in land rent, a uniform system of taxation, abolition of illegal levies, prohibition of the collection of rent and taxes in advance, distribution of waste lands, and limitation of the usurers' interests to twenty per cent. Those measures were never enforced. They could not be. They represented serious encroachments upon the privileges of Feudalism, and therefore could not be enforced without breaking its power. The Republic had died before it was born, because its prophets were loyal adherents to the traditions of Confucianism. Petit-bourgeois radicalism could make only a feeble advance towards Jacobinism, because it was encumbered with the adherence to the reactionary principles of Sun Yat-sen.

The new Central Executive Committee, elected by the Second Congress, revealed that the party was far from being free ot right-wing influence. In the highest organ (the Political Bureau), composed of nine members, the presence of one Communist was counterbalanced by the inclusion of two outspoken right-wing leaders (Sun Fo and C. C. Wu), who had been previously expelled from Canton.

Hu Han-min, banished for complicity with the assassination of Liao Chung-hai, two feudal-militarists (Tan Yen-kai and Chu Pei-teh) and a scion of the Shanghai bourgeoisie (T. V. Soong). As against that formidable array of reactionaries, there stood the lone apostle of petit-bourgeois radicalism, Wang Chin-wei, seconded by Chiang Kai-shek who was still an unknown category. Only ten out of the thirty-four members of the Central Executive Committee itself were whole-' hearted supporters of the left wing. The Western Hill Conference was condemned as a "a revolt against the party"; but the party was delivered to the rebels. Only a few rank counter-revolutionaries were expelled from the party, while its highest organ was packed with those who still remained inside. Evidently, the tide was on the point of turning. The blow fell sooner than expected. Just two months after the Second Congress had passed resolutions couched in radical phrases, Canton was the scene of a counter-revolutionary *coup d'etat* which ended the short-lived, half-hearted imitation of

Jacobinism. , . .

The *coup d'erat* of March 20, 1926 was the work ot Chiang Kai-shek who, since then, became a prominent figure in Chinese politics. He was born of a bourgeois family in Ningpo. As usual in China, his family was connected with modern capitalist enterprises, having at the same time stakes in feudal landed property. He joined the Kuo Min Tang before the revolution of 1911, but did not take much active part in politics. After the defeat of the second revolution, he practi cally abandoned politics, and turned to business. From that time he became very closely associated with Chang Ching-Kiang, a native of the same province. The latter belonged to a rich compra-dore family, and used to finance largely the earlier ventures of Sun Yat-sen. The business association during the youth of the two men continued in politics later on. The two together represented the classes which constituted the social basis of reformist nationalism. In 1923, Sun Yat-sen, after his meeting with Joffe, sent Chiang Kai-shek'to Moscow for looking over the situation there. On his return to Canton, he joined the army, and in 1924 was appointed the head of the newly established Wampoa Military Academy. There he played second fiddle to Liao Chung-hai. Upon the assassination of the latter, there was a rumour of a counter-revolutionary outbreak in Canton. Taking advantage of that situation, Chiang occupied the city with a large detachment of Wampoa cadets, supported by the

Workers'Guard. The military command of the capital served him as the stepping stone to eventual dictatorship in all affairs.

The Second Congress of the Kuo Min Tang had prepared the ground for the *coup d'etat* of March 20. Since an overwhelming majority in the highest organ of the party was given to those frankly hostile to the Communists, it was inevitable that sooner or later an attempt would be made to exterminate the latter. The imminent attack was directed ostensibly against the Communists. *1* he real object was to free the Nationalist Government from the revolutionary influence of the masses. The Kuo Min Tang had become the organ of revolutionary nationalism under the pressure of the masses. Supported by the working class, the Nationalist Government had carried on a heroic struggle against foreign Imperialism. The next step of attacking native reaction must be taken. The Nationalist Government could not stop where it had been driven. It must either go farther, or retrace its steps. In order to do the latter, it must be free from revolutionary influence of the force which has pushed it to that uncomfortable position. Not willing to destroy their creditable record with their own hand, the petit-bourgeois radicals readmitted the right-wingers into the leadership of the party. Thus, in spite of its apparent radicalism, the Second Congress of the Kuo Min Tang prepared the way for the betrayal of the revolution.. The betrayal began with the *coup d'etat* of March 20. The success of the plan of the right wing to recapture the leadership of the party was conditional upon the removal of the Communists from the strategic positions they had occupied by untiring political activity and unstinted service to the cause of the revolution. But the Communists were so deeply rooted in the movement that they could not be removed from their positions by simple administrative measures. They were the most active elements in every department of public life. Consequently, they were not only the indisputable leaders of the workers and peasants organisations, but wielded great influence even on the rank and file of the Kuo Min Tang. Their influence inside the Kuo Min Tang resulted from the fact that its members were very largely recruited from the workers and peasants, whose organisations politically were integral parts of the Kuo Min Tang. Finally, the Communists had established themselves firmly also in the newly created Nationalist Army by virtue of active work in its Political Department. Political propaganda among the officers as well as the ranks was the charac-

terisiic feature of the newly created Nationalist Army. The removal of the Communists, therefore, necessitated a regular *coup d'etat.* Some pretext must be found for that purpose. Having acquired the military command of Canton, Chiang Kai-shek, in collaboration with practically all the members of the Political Bureau of the Kuo Min Tang, was on the lookout for a plausible pretext.

All of a sudden, Chiang Kai-shek ordered the arrest of a number of junior officers of a gun-boat. They were accused of having been engaged in the preparation of an insurrection against the Government. On the pretext of precaution against any possible disturbance that might follow upon the arrest of the naval officers, a number of repressive measures were swiftly taken. The Workers' Guard was disarmed; several units of the newly created revolutionary army were similarly treated; and a number of Russian military advisers were arrested. The Kuo Min Tang had its representatives in each military unit for carrying on political propaganda. Most of those representatives happened to be Communists. As a Commander-in-Chief of the army, Chiang Kai-shek ordered their arrest. 1 he political director of the Wampoa Military Academy was himself placed under detention, being suspected of sympathy for the Communists. The plan had been prepared so carefully and the blow was so swift that "all were utterly unprepared and did not even dream that the *coup* was coming."[1] All the measures were taken within half a day, and by the evening of the twentieth of March, Chiang Kai-shek was completely the master of the situation. There was no opposition, fear and surprise having paralysed everybody.

Practically all the members of the Political Bureau of the Kuo Min Tang, with the sole exception of the Communist Tan Ping-san, supported the *coup d'etat.* The hero of petit-bourgeois radicalism, the head of the Nationalist Government, the chosen leader of the Kuo Min Tang, Wang Chin-wei, was completely isolated. His behaviour in that crisis, for all practical purposes, amounted to an abetment of the crime against the revolution. Afraid of the working class striding rapidly towards revolution, he bad condemned the plan of welcoming the reactionaries back to the leadership of the party, while indulging in radical phrases. Nevertheless the triumphant counter-revolution would not spare him. He was driven out of the country.

An emergency meeting of the Central Committee of the Kuo

Min Tang was convened to consider the situation created by the *coup d'etat* of March 20. It passed the following resolution: Since Chiang Kai-shek has always struggled for the revolution, it is hoped that he will realise his mistake in this event, but in view of the present situation it is desired that the comrades of the left should temporarily retreat."[2] That was virtual dismissal of Wang Chin-wei. After a few days, he left for Europe, because he "considered that the best way to solve the situation was for him to retreat and to allow Chiang to take charge of affairs for the time being."[3] On his departure, he wrote to Chiang imploring him "to keep to the revolutionary path." Wang Chin-wei acted just as Sun Yat-sen had done in 1911. Only the Republic deserted by the latter was hardly born; but Wang Chin-wei fled when there was no reason for him to do so if he would only have the courage to lead the revolutionary democratic masses, ready for a decisive struggle.

In spite of the debacle of petit-bourgeois radicalism and the defeat of the Communists owing to their own mistake, the mass movement was still there. It had the potentiality of throwing up new leaders to take the place of those removed either by their own cowardice or by counter-revolutionary violence. Chiang Kai-shek did not consider his position as yet secure enough to make a frontal attack upon the revolutionary mass movement as a whole. Having dealt the first blow, he decided to win the confidence of the masses with the object of utilising them for his own purposes. In a manifesto addressed to the workers and peasants, he offered an explanation of the events of March 20. He told that the raid on the headquarters of the State Committee was due to a misunderstanding, and promised to take those responsible to task. Some junior officers were formally punished; but that was immaterial, because the Workers' Guard remained disbanded, and the Strike Committee was no longer allowed to function as before.

All the right-wing leaders, expelled from the party or driven out of Canton, began to come back. A plenary session of the Central Committee of the Kuo Min Tang met on May 15. It was to celebrate the victory of counter-revolution. An atmosphere of tension was created by circulating rumours about a Communist attempt to overthrow the Government. That served as a pretext for declaring martial law on the eve of the meeting of Central Committee. The danger of revolution was still there. Therefore, precaution was

necessary.

Chiang Kai-sbek himself moved a special resolution "for the readjustment of party affairs". The whole object of the resolution was to restrict the activities of the Communists and to dislodge them from all positions of power inside the party as well as the army. The Communists were required "not to entertain any doubt on, or criticise, Dr. Sun or his principles." The Communist Party was required to hand over to the Executive of the Kuo Min Tang a list of its members inside the latter. It was decided that not more than one third of the seats on any Committee of the Kuo Min Tang should be occupied by Communists. Communists were prohibited from being the heads of any party or Government department. Members of the Kuo Min Tang on the other hand, were forbidden to join any other political organisation or participate in any activities initiated by such organisations. Finally, it was also resolved that the Central Committee of the Communist Party should not issue any instructions to the members of the party before submitting them for the approval of a joint committee of both the parties. The resolution was passed by an overwhelming majority. The left-wing leaders having discredited themselves by their own cowardice, the reactionaries had no difficulty in regaining their supremacy.

Another serious result of the *coup d'etat* was the destruction of the authority of the "Military Council"—a Committee of the Kuo Min Tang set up with the purpose of exercising political control over the armed forces. The Executive Committee formally elected Chiang Kai-shek to the leadership of the party. He appointed his friend, the rich merchant Chang Ching-kiang, as the chairman of the Central Executive Committee. All the Government and party offices were subordinated to Chiang Kai-shek as the Commander-in-Chief of the Nationalist Army. The Nationalist Government was transformed into a military dictatorship.

The downfall of petit-bourgeois radicalism was complete. Mistakes committed by the Communists contributed to the victory of reaction. Nevertheless, Canton still contained dangerous germs of revolution which could not be altogether destroyed. The blockage of Hongkong continued. The masses were still engaged in the struggle against Imperialism. It would be foolish for the bourgeoisie to cut the branch on which they were sitting. Deprived of the support of the masses, the Nationalist Government would be overthrown any

day by the feudal-militarists hovering on the horizon, always confident of liberal support from Hongkong. The bourgeoisie considered it to be tactically wise to temporise after dealing a staggering blow to the vanguard of the working class. The Communists had been disarmed. Petit-bourgeois radicalism had been demoralised. Now bourgeoisie could manoeuvre, pending the creation of conditions in which they expected to act with greater freedom. In order to relieve the tenseness of the situation, and get out of the revolutionary atmosphere of Canton, the Nationalist Government, under the dictation of Chiang Kai-shek, decided upon the policy of territorial expansion. An additional reason for military action north-wards was offered by the movement of Wu Pei-fu's troops towards Canton. All other issues were forgotton in the agitation for the "North Expedition". That was in accordance with the original programme of the National Government. The unification of the country must be brought about through military conquest. The Kuo Min Tang reverted to its tradition of military combinations.

The experience of Canton, however, had taught the Kuo Min Tang a valuable lesson. Even its most reactionary leaders came to realise the great potentiality of mass action. They had no sympathy for the interests of the masses. They were not prepared even to go to the extent of solving the problems of the bourgeois revolution. Yet they planned to wield the formidable weapon of mass action in order to carry through the policy of territorial expansion. But the masses could be mobilised into effective action only by the Communists. So the bourgeoisie decided to make a truce with the Communist Party, of course on their own conditions. In order to secure the co-operation of the Communists in the projected military expedition, Chiang Kai-shek sacrificed a few of his counter-revolutionary associates. The Garrison Commander of Canton was imprisoned. He had played a prominent part on March 20. The Foreign Minister C. C. Wu, the most reactionary representative of the big bourgeoisie, left for Shanghai—to inform the right-wing leaders that the situation in Canton was well in hand. Sun Fo was degraded from his high office. As if to compensate for the apparent and temporary setback to the forces of reaction, Hu Han-min returned from exile to resume his high place in the councils of the party. The truce between the Kuo Min Tang and the Communist Party was concluded in the meeting of the Central Executive Committee of the former held in May

1926. Chiang Kai-shek, in behalf of the feudal-bourgeois right wing, agreed to tolerate the Communists inside the Kuo Min Tang. For the meritorious service of retaining the co-operation of the Communists even after driving them out of all positions of power, the Central Committee of the Kuo Min Tang invested Chiang Kai-shek with dictatorial power.

The bourgeoisie recaptured the leadership of the Kuo Min Tang to transform it into an active agency of counter-revolution. Previously, it had failed to take up any revolutionary fight. From March 20, 1925, it began to fight actively against the revolution.

So terminated the short history of "Red" Canton. Chiang Kai-shek's military dictatorship was not Napoleonism. It was not the outcome of a successful bourgeois revolution. On the contrary, it was the grave-digger of a belated bourgeois revolution. But the efforts to stop the bourgeois-democratic revolution only contributed to the development of a greater revolution. Military victories strengthened the position of the feudal-bourgeois elements inside the Kuo Min Tang. But the mass movement, fomented to make those victories possible, at the same time, increased the fighting ability of the masses. In consequence, class struggle sharpened. The feeble voice of petit-bourgeois radicalism was throttled by triumphant reaction. But the forces of the revolution marched ahead, and the Kuo Min Tang was carried to power by mighty waves of a mass upheavel.

Notes

1. Hua Kang, "Great Chinese Revolution".

2. Li Chih-Jung, "The Resignation of Chairman Wang Chin-wei."

3. Tang Liang-li, "The Inner History of the Chinese Revolution".

CHAPTER XV

THE NORTH EXPEDITION

While, under the pressure of the mass movement, the Kuo Min Tang made a reluctant advance towards revolution, there appeared a new factor on the political horizon. It was the so-called "left militarists". The new factor grew out of the decomposition of militarism. The situation had changed in such a way as made it impossible for this or that war-lord to establish even the semblance of a central government commanding the recognition by a number of provinces for any length of time. Having brought down the monarchy, the process of decentralisation had gone farther. Since the rise and fall of the Republic, several war-lords had been ruling, plundering and pillaging the country. But the revolutionary awakening of the masses shook the social foundation of militarism. Mercenary armies were no longer always reliable. Soldiers, recruited from the pauperised peasantry, were liable to be infected by the spirit of revolt spreading through the peasant masses. Minor militarists tried to exploit that psychological atmosphere for promoting their own ambition. They declared their adhesion to the Kuo Ming Tang and the anti-imperialist movement, in order to retain the loyalty of their soldiers and secure the support of the peasantry as against the bigger war-lords.

Previously, the bourgeoisie had allied themselves with the feudal forces of decentralisation in their struggle against monarchist absolutism. Tn the new situation, they made a coalition with the "left militarists", hoping thereby to strengthen their position. But with such allies, the unification of the country was not possible. Immediately an impetus to the development of the revolution, the new alliance was made with the purpose of checking it eventually. The object was to free the Kuo Min Tang from the domination of the

revolutionary democratic masses. When the feudal-bourgeois elements regained the control of the Kuo Min Tang and the Nationalist Government, they launched upon the North Expedition with the object of forming a counter-revolutionary bloc with the "left" militarists.

The Nationalist Government had been established with the object of unifying the country under one central authority. That was demanded in the interest of the bourgeoisie. Trade was seriously injured by the never-ending civil wars. Exactions by the militarists ruined the economic life of the country. Ever since the passing of the Manchus, the bourgeoisie had failed signally to create a centralised modern State. They had supported this or that feudal war-lord, hoping that he would do this work for them. Finally, there appeared on the scene the new force with the support of which the bourgeoisie could realise their aspirations. But a centralised modern State, created with the support of the masses, was sure to be an instrument of a great social revolution which the bourgeoisie did not favour. They desired certain changes in the conditions of country; but the changes should not go to the extent of a revolution. Consequently, the programme of the Nationalist Government about the unification of the country remained in abeyance. As long as the feudal war-lords controlled large areas, the nationalist bourgeoisie did not dare challenge their position.

The opportunity came when allies could be found inside the ranks of the militarists. Ever since 1924 the process of decomposition had been noticeable. In 1926 militarism was seriously weakened by eternal quarrels. Apart from its internal contradictions, its rear was threatened everywhere by the awakening of the masses. The peasantry were tired of destructive civil war. They heard the echo of the mighty voice raised by the urban democracy. Taking advantage of the situation, smaller Generals began to revolt against the warlords, splitting up the forces of militarism. The Kuo Min Tang welcomed them in its ranks, and in coalition with them extended the authority of the Nationalist Government as far as the Yangtse.

The most representative type of left militarists was Feng Yu-hsiang. He was a social phenomenon. Born of a peasant family in the province of Anhwei, he enlisted himself as an ordinary soldier while still very young. He was driven into the army by the dire destitution

of his family. But it was not until 1915 that he acted as anything more than a soldier, obeying orders given by no matter who. In that year, he was sent to Szechuan with the task of defending that province against the attack of the revolutionaries from Yunan. There he revolted against Yuan Shih-kai, when the news reached him that the latter had decided to found a new ruling dynasty. But still, Feng did not join the general revolt. He reflected the sentiment of the comparatively well-to-do peasantry who, tired of civil war, desired peace, but were too conservative to favour a revolution. That social background distinguished Feng from the usual run of militarist rulers.

Eventually, he became the Governor of the province of Shensi under Wu Pei-fu. It is reported that as Governor of Shensi, Feng departed from the usual method of the militalists' rule. Instead of being a feared, but hated, parasite, as the militarists invariably were, he endeavoured to win the support of the people. With that purpose, he showed some concern for public welfare. In the absence of a central Exchequer, armies could be maintained and wars waged only by fleecing the people. Feng's policy of winning the support of the people, therefore, could not go to the extent of freeing them from the heavy burden of militarism. He only sought to introduce a regulated system of taxation by prohibiting indiscriminate exactions and banditry. In order to keep the soldiers away from robbery, he made it a point to pay them regularly.

Feng's distinction from other militarists was attributed to his profession of Christianity. He might have been influenced in that way; but the real reason of his distinction was different. The desire of the conservative peasantry to be left in peace, undisturbed either by reaction or by revolution, produced Feng Yu-hsiang and his army which combined the historical significance of the German Peasants' War, the puritanism of the English Roundheads and the primitive democratic tendency of the native Taipings. Cromwell became the ideal of Feng Yu-hsiang who, at the same time, inherited some traditions of the Taiping Revolt.

In 1922, Feng Yu-hsiang was appointed the Inspector General of the forces under the command of Wu Pei-fu. In that capacity he was stationed in Peking. There he came under the influence of the democratic movement developing ever since 1919. The uarrow-visioned peasant in him came in contact with the bourgeoisie aspiring

for power. Still averse to do anything that might contribute to the disturbance, so hated by the rich peasantry, Feng nevertheless came to understand that peace and order, coveted by the class he represented, could not be established piecemeal. His "roundheads" were of no avail unless they could be the instrument for capturing political power. As Commandant of the Metropolis, he was in a very favourable position to strike the decisive blow. After two years' preparations, he finally did that in October 1924.

While his chief, We Pei-fu, was engaged in a huge trial of strength with the rival war-lord Chang Tso-lin, Feng turned against him and captured Peking. That was a staggering blow. Wu Pei-fu was completely routed. The victorious Manchurians swept down as far as the Yangtse. But Feng held Peking with the central and western provinces. He imprisoned the rank reactionary Tsao Kun, who had become the President of the imaginary Republic by bribery. He went farther and expelled the boy-Emperor from the Forbidden City. But those actions were not followed up by any positively revolutionary measures. Instead of destroying the defeated militarism by a swift attack, Feng chose to maintain only the military control of the Capital, while entrusting the task of attending to political affairs to the discredited elder statesman Tuan Chi-jui. The latter proposed to convene a conference for the unification of the country on a mutual understanding of the contending parties. He entered into negotiations even with Chang Tso-lin, the most reactionary of all the militarists. Under his advice, Feng agreed to ally himself with Chang, and even Sun Yat-sen inclined towards joining that unholy alliance. It was to settle the details of that affair that Sun Yat-sen visited Peking just before his death.

The arch-reactionary Chang Tso-lin, however, did not trust Feng, and with the help of Japan made preparations to drive him out of Peking. In November 1925, he moved large forces towards the city. But it was the turn for his camp to decompose. No sooner had the compaign begun than the loyalty of his allies south of Tientsin was found to be undependable, and he was easily driven back by Feng Yu-hsiang. The trouble was not confined to the outskirts of his territories. It broke out at the very centre of his domain. A group of his Generals demanded that he should lay down the Cbmmand and return to Mukden. The demand was presently backed up by the revolt of a section of his army commanded by Kuo Sun-lin who

marched upon Mukden. Just at that moment, there was an attempt in Peking to overthrow the Government of Tuan Chi-jui and establish a democratic regime on the lines of the Canton Nationalist Government. While in occupation of Peking, Feng had all along been supported by the democratic movement. His revolt against Wu Pei-fu had been condemned as treachery by other militarists and the foreign powers. But the urban democratic masses under the leadership of the Communists recognised the objectively revolutionary significance of his military action. It was expected that he would place his military forces at the disposal of the democratic movement. Counting upon his military support, it was planned to overthrow the Tuan Chi-jui Government by an insurrection of the democratic masses. But at the crucial moment, he failed to come forward with the expected help. The insurrection was easily suppressed.

The reactionaries were not slow to detect that Feng Yu-hsiang was half-hearted in his alliance with the revolutionary democratic movement. They decided to act quickly to drive him out of Peking before it was too late, before he came more under the revolutionary influence. The military Governor of Tientsin had not supported Chang Tso-lin in his campaign against Feng. Evidently on the instigation of foreign Imperialism, he now took the initiative and issued a manifesto to the Chinese people denouncing the "Christian General" as an agent of Bolshevism, and declaring his intention to drive Feng out of Peking for the sake of saving China from "red ruin". Feng could no longer remain inactive. He moved his troops against Tientsin and occupied the headquarters of his adversary who withdrew southward in a veritable rout.

The debacle of Wu Pei-fu, the decomposition of the forces of Chang Tso-lin, and the rout of the anti-red hero of Tientsin, proved that, had Feng acted with determination and rapidity from the very beginning, reactionary militarism could have been altogether destroyed. In the campaign against Tientsin, his troops were assisted by the working class, by attacking the enemy from the rear. But Feng's strategy was never Nepoleonic. He always acted on the principle of not risking a battle until there was no way out of it. He was guided by the sentiments of the conservative peasantry who disliked disturbance. Desirous of establishing peaceful and orderly conditions, he was reluctant to do what his social supporters resented. He sought to win the confidence of the peasantry not by

advocating revolutionary measures against the forces of their oppression, but by showing that he did not initiate civil war. The comparatively well-to-do peasant proprietors of the northern provinces had something to lose; therefore, they approved of Feng's cautious policy. Anxious to act according to the desire of the conservative rural masses, he failed to be faithful to his urban supporters. Reluctant to carry on a revolutionary war while the conditions were all favourable, he was bound to be beaten.

Chang Tso-lin's position in Manchuria was saved by the intervention of Japanese Imperialism. Under the walls of Mukden the rebels were beaten by the Japanese troops. Their leaders were executed with exemplary cruelty. On the other hand, with the help of Anglo-American Imperialism, Wu Pei-fu had again raised a large army. Before long Feng Yu-hsiang began to feel the uncomfortable result of his dilatory tactics. The two bigger war-lords entered into an alliance against the common enemy, and Peking was attacked from three sides. With the cry of "Bolshevik danger", the well-to-do peasants of Central China were incited to revolt against the Second People's Army, an auxiliary to Feng's forces. His rear being thus endangered, Feng withdrew from Peking, which was occupied by the reactionary alliance in March 1926. Thus ended the first stage in the development of left militarism.

The second group of left militarists appeared in the Yangtse Valley, its leading figure being General Tang Shen-chi of Hunan who subsequently played a prominent part in the Nationalist Government of Hankow. At that time, there were five principal military constellations in China. Chang Tso-lin ruled in the Manchurian provinces and, in collaboration with Wu-Pei-fu, regained the control of the Peking Government. The latter dominated the central provinces with his headquarters in Hunan. Shanghai, together with the five maritime provinces, were under Sun Chuan-fang. Shantung was under Chang Tsung-chang whose power extended to the metropolitan province of Chili. Finally, Feng Yu-hsiang, though expelled from Peking, still retained the control of the western provinces. In addition, there was Yen Hsi-shan, the so-called "model tuchun" of Shansi.

When Wu Pei-fu was driven out of power by Feng Yu-hsiang, his former lieutenants in the Yangtse provinces became independent lords of their respective domains. After Wu Pei-fu had rehabilitated his position, they were no longer willing to owe allegiance to their

former chief. The Governor of Hupeh, for example, in 1924 extended hospitality to his defeated chief, but would not countenance his scheme to regain power. Tang Shen-chi captured the rich province of Hunan. In the other Yangtse provinces, lesser military lights also wanted to fish in troubled waters; they became independent potentates while their chief was in difficulty.

All those "left militarists", directly or indirectly, openly or secretly, expressed their sympathy with the Nationalist Government of Canton. With the object of securing popular support to the struggle for the realisation of their individual ambitions, they began to talk of revolution, and assumed an apparently benevolent attitude towards the masses.

There was a plan to form a Southern Federation to resist the domination of the northern militarists controlling the nominal central Government in Peking. History was on the point of repeating itself— after a decade. The first stone in the foundation of the Nationalist Government of Canton was laid in 1917, when the Governors of several southern provinces made an alliance against the reactionaries of Peking. That confederacy did not materialise into anything of political value, although it received the support of the bourgeoisie. Notwithstanding the apparent similarity, the situation in 1926 was different. The motive force of the movement was no longer the ambition of provincial satraps supported by the opportunism of the cowardly bourgeoisie. Those factors were still in operation, but a popular awakening made all the difference in the situation.

The decomposition of militarism created conditions in which the bourgeoisie could take the initiative for unifying at least a part of the country under a central Government. There were two factors which could be utilised for that purpose. On the one hand, there was the revolutionary awakening of the masses and, on the other, the readiness of lesser militarists to owe formal allegiance to the Nationalist Government in the struggle to overthrow the bigger warlords. The astounding success of the North Expedition was due to the fact that, for a time, the two factors could be wielded together without any great hitch. There was nothing in common between the two. The} were actuated by entirely different motives. But, for the moment, they could unite against a common enemy. The bourgeoisie wanted to make use of both the factors for aggrandising their power through territorial expansion. The process, nevertheless, coincided

with a stormy development of the mass movement. The result was that the logic of revolutionary development defeated the object of the bourgeoisie. As soon as the first stage of territorial expansion was completed, there began the struggle for power between the bourgeoisie and their left militarist allies. That struggle again was cut across by a greater struggle—between the democratic masses and all the other components of the united nationalist front taken together. Finally, the bourgeoisie and the left militarists composed their differences in the face of the common danger,—the revolutionary masses. The alliance of two classes with antagonistic interests could not be without a hitch; but the fear of revolution and hatred for the working class were the cement that held it together in the revolutionary crisis.

The North Expedition started from Canton in July 1926. Amazing the world, it swept the entire south of the country in two months, and reached the Yangtse in September. The Han Cities in the centre of the country were captured. The progress towards Shanghai was not so rapid. Nevertheless, in March 1927, the Nationalist Army occupied Shanghai as well as Nanking. In course of the Expedition, enemy Commanders, one after another, joined the Nationalist Army. Within six months from the beginning of the Expedition, the Nationalist Army grew ten times larger. The newly acquired forces were all mercenary, and their officers were no friends of the revolution. The potential danger to the revolution, however, was counteracted by the development of another force with equal rapidity. Not only the urban democratic masses, but peasants throughout the newly occupied provinces were mobilised in the struggle against foreign Imperialism and native militarism. Side by side with the growth of the Kuo Min Tang and the Communist Party, there developed auxiliary organisations with mass membership. At the beginning of 1927 the total membership of the trade unions was more than two millions. The number of the organised peasants was several times as much. The most remarkable feature of the whole campaign was the enthusiastic support it received from the popular masses. The army had always been a dreaded and hated thing in China. But the Nationalist Army was hailed by the people everywhere as the liberator. The forces of the enemy were thus caught between two fires. Surrounded by the hostile people, they flew in all directions, even before being attacked by the nationalist troops. Many enemy

commanders declared their adherence to the nationalist cause, that being the only means by which they could hold their forces together. Notwithstanding the motive with which the military expedition had been launched, it became a means of developing the revolution.

The programme of the Kuo Min Tang was circulated and broadcast to win the support of the'masses. The second Congress of the party had raised the issue of an agrarian revolution. It had declared that "in order to strengthen the foundation of the revolution, the Kuo Ming Tang must first of all seek the participation of the peasants; that the policy of the party must be in the first instance to pay attention to the interests of the peasants; and the action of the Government must be directed to the liberation of the peasantry." That declaration of the Kuo Min Tang reached the peasant masses even ahead of the Nationlist Army. Consequently, they were ready to welcome the army as their deliverer. The army, though still largely mercenary in composition, was itself affected by revolutionary enthusiasm. It was fighting for an ideal. To each unit, there was attached a political commissar who conducted propaganda among the troops. Wherever it was stationed, the army was brought into close touch with the masses of the people through public meetings and demonstrations. It was no longer an instrument of exaction and oppression. It became a part of the people, fighting with their whole-hearted support, for their interest. In short, the spectacular success of the expedition was due partly to the defection in the enemy camp and very largely to the revolutionary ferment among the masses. The decomposition of militarism itself was due to this latter cause.

The first stage of the expedition reached its climax in the occupation of the British Concession at Hankow. The expedition started from Kwangtung in two columns, one through Human towards Hankow and the other through Kiangsi having Shanghai for its objective. The former was substantially reinforced by the adhesion of Tang Shen-chi who revolted against his former chief Wu Pei-fu. The Nationalist Army was commanded by the Governor of Human himself when it occupied the provincial capital. It marched upon the Han Cities (Woochang, Hanyang and Hankow). The first, being the capital of the province of Hupeh, was strongly garrisoned by Wu Pei-fu's troops. It had been invested by another column of the Nationalist- Army before Changsha was taken. But, being strongly garrisoned, Woochang could not be captured so easily while the main body of the enemy forces was engaged in defending Woochang, Tang

Shen-chi, marching from his base in Hunan, crossed the Yangtse and took possession of Hanyang with its great arsenal. The Commander of the newly occupied city also went over to the nationalists and was rewarded with a high post. Thereafter, Hanow was captured practically without any resistance. Surrounded from all sides, Woochang held out still for another month. The only real battle of the whole campaign took place for the capture of that old, strongly walled, city.

The hero of that battle was the so-called "Iron Army" which was the nucleus of a really revolutionary force. The "Iron Army" had been recruited largely from the Workers' Guards formed during the boycott of Hongkong. It was officered entirely by cadets from the Whampoa Academy. Its driving force was a division commanded by the youthful Communist Yeh Tin. Tang Shen-chi's plan was to have that revolutionary nucleus of the nationalist forces destroyed in the battle against overwhelming odds at Woochang. At any rate, while the "Iron Army" kept the main body of Wu Pei-fu's forces engaged, the "left" militarists carried the prize of Hanyang and Hankow. They were firmly established in power before the revolutionary army could prevent them from doing so.

But the scheme of the veiled counter-revolutionaries met obstruction from the workers of Hankow. While the nationalist forces were marching upon the Han Cities, great mass demonstrations were taking place there against native militarism and foreign Imperialism. Those demonstrations, backed up by a general strike of nearly a quarter of a million workers, had the effect of an attack upon the rear of Wu Pei-fu's forces when these had to face the Nationalist Army. It was the working class, enthusiastically supported by the urban petit-bourgeoisie (students, artisans, small traders, employees etc.), that frustrated the plan of Tang Shen-chi, and created at Hankow the base for a struggle against the feudal-bourgeois right wing of the Kuo Ming Teng on the point of betraying the revolution.

In view of the fact that the right wing, led by Chiang Kai-shek, was regaining dictatorial power in the party as well as in the Government, the petit-bourgeois left wing of the Kuo Min Tang encouraged the action of the working class, not only in the Han Cities, but all along the Yangtse. The provinces of Hunan and Hupeh became the scene of a powerful mass movement, in the face of which the "left" militarists did not dare capture power openly. The old China was

no more. In the new situation, a General could not do what he pleased. His troops were placed in the midst of a surging sea of revolutionary mass movement. The soldiers were themselves affected by the revolutionary awakening. In that atmosphere, no army was immune from decomposition. Consequently, the "left" militarists considered it to be the best policy to submit themselves ostensibly to the Kuo Min Tang and wait for development.

The real power fell in the hands of the working class which was partially armed. In the beginning of December 1926, the British Concession at Hankow was captured by the masses. The nationalists scored a great victory, not only over the militarist Wu Pei-fu, but also over foreign Imperialism. Finding it a very risky adventure to defend its ill-gotten privilege against a whole nation in revolt, British Imperialism agreed to the Nationalist Government taking over the Concessions at Hankow and Kiukiang. Wuhan, the collective name given to the Han Cities, became the new centre of the democratic revolution which had suffered a defeat at Canton on March 20, 1926.

The main column of the Nationalist Army, commanded by Chiang Kai-shek himself, met greater resistance on the way to its coveted goal—Shanghai. Its march through the province of Kiangsi had not been very effectively opposed. Nanchang, the capital of the province, was captured simultaneously with the occupation of Wuhan. But then began the real Sght. Although his camp also was not free from defection, Sun Chuan-fang could count upon foreign aid which was not so easily available for Wu Pei-fu, owing to the fact that the latter's forces were located far away from the sea-coast. That advantage, however, was counter-balanced by the fact that Shanghai was the home of the revolutionary proletariat which assailed Sun Chuan-fang's forces from the rear while they were attacked by the Nationalist Army on the front.

At the end of 1926, Shanghai was in a state of siege. The Nationalist Army had closed up, cutting all connections inland to the south and west. At that juncture, the Governor of Chekiang declared the independence of his province. He was in secret alliance with the Shantung war-lord Chang Tsung-chang who was a rival of Sun Chuan-fang for the control of Shanghai. On the other hand, a formidable force of international Imperialism was concentrated on the sea with the object of defending Shanghai against any possible revo-

lutionary attack. In those circumstances, Chiang Kai-shek showed great reluctance to press upon Shanghai. He was averse to displease the imperialist Powers, and forfeit the sympathy of the Shanghai bourgeoisie. While the working class began to assail the rear of the enemy, Chiang Kai-shek's army was in no hurry to strike. There went on mysterious negotiations for joint control of Shanghai. Sun Chuan-fang withdrew his troops from Shanghai which passed under the control of his rival. One by one, a number of enemy Generals went over to the nationalists. The key to that bewildering situation was the anxiety of the nationalists to come to some agreement with all concerned with the control of Shanghai, namely, foreign Imperialism, the native bourgeoisie and the militarists. The plan was to bring about a nationalist occupation of Shanghai by means other than revolutionary. The naval and military forces of Imperialism, with whom rested the last word about the fate of China's economic metropolis, would not permit any change in the control of that important position except on their own conditions.

While the nationalist leaders were involved in that effort to find the line of least resistance, there developed in Shanghai a powerful mass movement seriously challenging foreign Imperialism as well as native reaction. On February 19 a general strike was declared to celebrate the nationalist occupation of the province of Chekiang. The strike quickly developed into an insurrection against the retreating forces of Sun Chuan-fang. That was a period of transition, Shanhai having for the moment no established authority. Sun Chuan-fang was withdrawing, to be replaced by his rival. The working class made a bold effort to take advantage of the moment for establishing a democratic city government elected by the people. The democratic masses rallied round the working class; the Nationalist Army was only twenty miles away from the city, and there was no obstacle before it. But it refused to act. Under the deepening frown of the imperials! fleet, on the one hand, and before the advancing army of Chang Tsung-chang, on the other, a democratic government came into existence in Shanghai. Having acted so heroically for aiding the victory of the Nationalist Army, the working class was betrayed by the latter in that critical moment. Single-handed, the Shanghai working class could not hold the position for a long time against such overwhelming odds. With the help of foreign Imperialism and all the native reactionaries, the "Shanghai

Volunteer Corps" was formed. The working class was declared to be the real enemy of vested interest. That was the signal for the militarists to strike at the hated enemy. Shanghai became the scene of an orgy of bloody repression. Workers were arrested in hundreds, and their leaders simply beheaded in public.

Only after the revolutionary democratic movement had been thus crushed by the greatly superior forces of reaction with exemplary barbarity, did the Nationalist Army march into Shanghai, but even then not to avenge its heroic allies; it followed up its treachery by an open attack against the democratic forces of revolution. The first act of the Nationalist Army on its arrival at Shanghai was to turn upon the revolutionary working class with fierce cruelty, which even surpassed that committed by the hangmen of Chang Tsung-chang. It became obvious that the Nationalist Army was allowed by international Imperialism to reach the coveted goal on condition that it would ruthlessly suppress the revolutionary movement. The nationalist Generals ordered wholesale shooting of the workers; a ferocious attack was made upon the Communist Party, because the latter demanded that political power should not be usurped by the militarists, but remain vested in the democratic "City Council" elected by the people.

The success of the North Expedition thus coincided with a fierce clash between the two forces that had contributed to that success. The Nationalist Army, having reached the Yangtse Valley, from Wuhan to Shanghai, the Kuo Min Tang had to choose between the revolutionary democracy and left militarism. In course of the campaign, both had increased in power, claiming the right to determine the character of the further development of the nationalist movement. The bourgeoisie could retain the leadership of the movement by allying with either of the contending forces, respectively of revolution and counter-revolution. There was no hesitation on their part. They had launched upon the policy of territorial expansion with the object of freeing the Nationalist Government from the influence of the revolutionary masses. At the critical moment, upon the conclusion of the North Expedition, they preferred the alliance with feudalism represented by the left militarists. But the petit-bourgeois left wing of the Kuo Min Tang hesitated. In the half-hearted struggle against the feudal-bourgeois right wing, the petit-bourgeois radicals tried to ride on two horses which could never make a harmonious team. The

desire to retain the support of left militarism seriously disturbed their alliance with the revolutionary masses; they were eventually obliged to break that alliance and thus betray the revolution.

Following the success of the North Expedition, the National Democratic Revolution was overtaken by a severe crisis, which destroyed the Kuo Min Tang. It ceased to be the organ of a revolutionary struggle. Mocking at the principle of Sun Yat-sen, class struggle inside its own ranks broke out into a fierce conflict. The bourgeoisie was the first to attack. They had begun it already at Canton. Arriving at their base in Shanghai, they discarded all pretence, and made it clear that, should the Nationalist Revolution go farther than they wished, they would turn against it. National interest was subordinated to class interest. The petit-bourgeoisie tried to play the ostrich game They sought to ignore unpalatable realities which rudely challenged their pet doctrines of neo-Confucianism. But there is no neutrality in a revolutionary struggle. Not willing to stand faithfully by the revolutionary masses, they presently found themselves in the other camp. A consolidation of the forces of counter-revolution under the leadership of the Kuo Min Tang was the net outcome of the North Expedition.

CHAPTER XVI

THE KUO MIN TANG SPLITS

An organisation embracing a variety of social elements with conflicting interests can never be a cohesive political party. Until its reorganisation in 1924, the Kuo Min Tang was the party of the bourgeoisie, although it entered into opportunist alliances with certain sections of the feudal aristocracy and patriarchal officials. Since all those classes could not agree on all questions at all times, the Kuo Min Tang remained a very loose combination without any definite political programme. After the reorganisation, its social composition became still more heterogeneous. Its ranks were swelled by the influx of workers and peasants, while the reactionary social elements standing to the right of the bourgeoisie continued to be in it. Strictly speaking, the Kuo Min Tang ceased to be a political party. It became an alliance of several classes ostensibly with a revolutionary purpose. Nevertheless, the exigencies of the revolutionary struggle forced upon it the form of a political party.

The Kuo Min Tang represented the specific form of political organisation produced by the conditions of a colonial country. The social character of the Nationalist Revolution in colonial countries being bourgeois-democratic, it is bound to take place on the basis of a broad coalition of classes. As a matter of fact, the bourgeois revolution under all circumstances involves a variety of classes which are interested in the overthrow of feudalism. When it is given the additional task of fighting foreign Imperialism, the coalition of classes, constituting its basis, necessarily becomes still broader. The nationalist revolution in the colonial countries primarily involves the bourgeoisie, the peasantry and the proletariat. But under certain circumstances, other social elements, in so far as Imperialism is antagonistic to their

interest, may be drawn into the alliance. But such a combination is bound to be temporary, liable to fall apart as soon as class contradictions become manifest in course of the anti-imperialist struggle. Owing to the instability of its composition, the anti-imperialist alliance finds itself constantly in a state of flux, and is shaken from time to time by internal conflicts.

That was the case with the Kuo Min Tang. Its reorganisation in 1924 was soon followed by a crisis. The broadening of its social basis was vehemently opposed by the bourgeoisie under the pressure of their feudal-patriarchal allies. These elements had dominated the politics of the Kuo Min Tang until then. Ostensibly the struggle was on the question of admitting the Communists into the Kuo Min Tang. Essentially, the issue was different. It was concerning the hegemony in the struggle for national liberation. Should national liberation be interpreted in terms of the sectional interests of the bourgeoisie, or should it conform with the requirements of the masses? In the latter case, the movement for national liberation would be committed to an object no less than a complete bourgeois democratic revolution. The overthrow of foreign Imperialism should synchronise with the destruction of native feudalism and all other forms of precapitalist social relations. By admitting the revolutionary vanguard of the working class into its fold, the Kuo Min Tang logically committed itself to the latter course. Naturally, the Old Guard did not approve of that step. That inner conflict eventually culminated in a split of the party.

The process of the split coincided with the short advance towards Jacobinism. That was an instance of the dialectics of historical developments. The intensification of revolutionary struggle necessarily accentuated the conflict of the interests of the various classes involved in it. The struggle could develop further in the revolutionary direction by ending the conflict at the cost of the elements trying to break it. The other alternative was a composition of the internal conflict on the terms of those opposed to the advance in the revolutionary direction. Those terms necessarily included severe restrictions on the activities of the revolutionary classes. In the beginning of the process of differentiation, the development was in the former direction. The advance towards Jacobinism coincided with a formal expulsion from the party of the anti-revolutionary elements. But because the expulsion was only formal, the anti-revolutionary elements

successfully conspired against their opponents, and before long regained the control of the party. The end of the short period of Jacobinism marked a reunion of the conflicting elements. But it was a superficial and deceptive unity. The result of the North Expedition again opened up the old wound. It became evident that the conflict of classes was irreconciable. In consequence of the territorial expansion and the stormy development of the forces of revolutionary democracy, the conflict of classes inside the Kuo Min Tang became extremely acute, much more so than ever before.

The new crisis developed on the background of a more complicated situation. In course of the military operations, a third factor had entered the arena. It was the so-called left militarists. Through their formal adherence to the Kuo Min Tang, the armed forces of the Nationalist Government came largely under their control. They acted as the agent of feudalism. The appearance of that new factor enormously strengthened the tendency towards the establishment of a military dictatorship. It confused the situation because owing to its interference the struggle between the right and left wings for the leadership of the party ceased to be on a class line. Both the wings allied themselves with militarists. Nevertheless, the struggle ostensibly was between the principle of the party control of the Government and military dictatorship. The left wing contended that not only the civil Government but the military affairs as well should be guided collectively by the party. The right wing was accused of violating that principle. The right wing on its part maintained that it had not violated the principle, and accused the petit-bourgeois radicals of subservience to the Communists. In spite of the formalistic bickerings, both were equally inclined towards military dictatorship, inasmuch as it was a part of the programme of the nationalist movement.

The revolution was to be accomplished in three stages, the first of them being unification of the country through military action. The first stage of the revolution was still far from being completed. The country was not yet united under one central authority. Therefore, military dictatorship was on the order of the day. No believer in Sun Yat-sen's political doctrines could be free from the inclination to military dictatorship. The difference was that, while the big bourgeois right wing could set up its own dictatorship, the petit-bourgeois pseudo-radicals were not able to do so. They allied themselves with

the "left militarists", who sought to capture supreme power by the pretension of being stout defenders of the principle of party control. But in reality the "left militarists" were also defenders of feudalism. Through the control of the military forces in the leftist camp, those agents of feudalism transformed the Nationalist Government into a military dictatorship.

In the last analysis, the dispute was not over military dictatorship. All were in favour of it. The question was, who should exercise it. The struggle took place in a situation which was extremely complicated by all these currents and cross-currents. There were no less than four sets of conflicts in operation. There was the old conflict about the leadership of the party. Secondly, the new factor, namely, the left militarists, contended with the bourgeoisie for the exercise of military dictatorship. In the third place, there was the conflict between the petit-bourgeois radicals and Communists for the leadership of the revolutionary struggle. The former resented the fact that, by the logic of events, the hegemony of the revolutionary struggle had passed to be the proletariat. In order to really loyal to the revolution, they must give up the pretension to be the saviours of the masses, and act according to the will of the latter. Finally, there was the basic conflict between the exploiting and exploited classes—a conflict that cut across the whole situation.

Owing to such complicated cross-currents in the background, the new schism in the Kuo Min Tang was entirely different from the old. The struggle over the alliance with the Communist Party had been clearly on class lines. The Old Guard, composed of feudal lords, patriarchal literati, officials of the old school, and big merchants, opposed a broadening of the social basis of the party. They were afraid that the new social orientation and its reorganisation would weaken their hold on the party. As against them, the left wing, composed of young intellectuals and representing the awakening urban democracy, welcomed an ally with whose aid they expected to capture the leadership of the party. The *coup d'etat* of March 20 was an outbreak of that original struggle on a clear class line. The right wing regained its supremacy.

The immediate cause of the *coup d'etat* was the struggle between Chiang Kai-shek and Wang Chin-wei for the control of the Wampoa Mititary Academy. At that time both belonged to the same group

inside the Kuo Min Tang. The former was the head of the Academy as regards military instruction, while the latter was the political director. According to the generally accepted principle that all affairs should be under party control, Wang Chin-wei's function was supreme. He was the chosen leader of the party, and in that capacity claimed the political direction also of the military affairs. His overthrow indicated which way the wind was blowing. The new military force created by the Nationalist Government, owing unconditional allegiance to it, tended to become a weapon in the hand of the bourgeoisie. Chiang Kai-shek acted as the representative of the bourgeoisie as against Wang Chin-wei whose radical nationalism was heading towards revolutionary democracy.

As soon as the nucleus of a new military force came under the control of representatives of the bourgeoisie inside the party, the right wing was eager to remove it from the revolutionary atmosphere of Canton. The North Expedition was a necessary consequence of the *coup d'etat* of March 20. Military operations and territorial expansion provided the right wing with an opportunity for building up a fairly cohesive army around the nucleus created at Canton. Possessing something of its own, it could assimilate the left militarists won over during the campaign, seldom by political conviction, but often by very questionable means such as bribery.

As the Commander of the firm nucleus of the Nationalist Army, Chiang Kai-shek could claim and maintain his supreme authority over the armed forces inflated rapidly through the adhesion of questionable elements. He was well on the road to a military dictatorship. His petit-bourgeois rival had to depend entirely upon the left militarist allies. Chiang Kai-shek's military dictatorship was resented not only by his old political rivals—the followers of Liao Chung-hai and Wang Chin-wei. Many right-wingers, associated with him in the struggle against Jacobinism at Canton, also became jealous of him when he began to acquire too much power. Unable to control him from inside, they went over to the opposing camp, which took over the fraudulent label of the "left wing". After the split, resulting from the North Expedition, the "left wing" counted among its leaders an inveterate right-winger like Sun Fo, a typical member of the Old Guard like Tan Yen-kai, a scion of the big bourgeoisie like T. V. Soong, a hard-boiled reactionary like the ex-Christian Bishop Hsu Chien, and a Victorian liberal like Eugene Chen. Those new acqui-

sitions, added to the feudal militarists, until a few days ago lieutenants of the war-lord Wu Pei-fu. made the left wing a motley crew. The struggle inside the Kuo Min Tang was developing on the background of an acute conflict of classes. But the split did not take place along the line of that conflict. Superficial issues of personal jealousy and clique-rivalry for power overshadowed serious political issues. Consequently, the split made the situation even more complicated.

Wuhan was the first important city on the Yangtse reached by the Nationalist Army. Soon after it was captured, the Central Executive Committee of the Kuo Min Tang, still at Canton, decided that the seat of the Government should be removed there. Large expansion of territories under its jurisdiction, and inflation of the military forces by the adhesion of new elements, required that the Government should be situated in a place from where all affairs could be guided practically and effectively. The Central Executive Committee had an overwhelming right-wing majority. It had supported Chiang Kai-shek first in his attack upon the incipient forces of Jacobinism, and then in the policy of increasing the power of the bourgeoisie through territorial expansion and alliance with left militarism.

The decision was in complete accord with the requirements of the situation. The place chosen for the new seat of the Government was of great economic importance and strategic value. It was situated in the middle of the country. At that moment, no better place could be found. For traditional reasons, Nanking might have been preferable for the nationalist headquarters. But the campaign in Kiangsi had not been until then successful. Consequently, Nanking was still far beyond reach. It is doubtful whether the capture of Shanghai was in the original plan of the campaign. If Shanghai remained in the control of hostile forces, Nanking would be a very insecure place for the seat of the Nationalist Government. The original plan of the campaign was to march right up towards Peking with the object of joining forces with Feng Yu-hsiang and the "model tuchun" of Shansi, who in the mean time had also declared his adherence to the Kuo Min Tang. Wuhan would be the ideal base for carrying on the campaign towards Peking. At the same time, it could also be the base of operation down the Yangtse for helping the capture of Nanking. The army of Chiang Kai-shek, struggling in Kiangsi with very

bad means of communication with the base at far off Canton, would be very greatly reinforced by the transfer of the headquarters to Wuhan.

From all these considerations, it is evident that the decision of the Central Executive Committee to move the headquarters to Wuhan did not represent even remotely a revolt against the incipient military dictatorship of Chiang Kai-shek. All speculation in that respect was set aside by the selection of Commissioners who were to proceed to Wuhan with the task of organising the new headquarters. They were Sun Fo, Hsu Chien, T.V. Soong and Eugene Chen. None of them could be suspected of any radical sympathy. They never belonged to the left wing. Indeed, they were selected for their clear social bias. They could be relied upon to counter-balance effectively any possible revolutionary aberration on the part of left-wingers like Tang Yen-tab and Chen Kum po, who had accompanied the military expedition. Borodin accompanied the Commissioners. That fact has been interpreted as evidence of a conspiracy against Chiang Kai-shek. But it was a matter of course that the Chief Adviser of the Government should accompany it to its new seat.

The Commissioners of the Central Executive Committee, accompanied by their adviser Borodin, arrived at their destination by the end of December 1926. On January 1, Wuhan was declared as the capital of Nationalist China. But meanwhile, things had happened independently of the decision of the Central Executive Committee of the Kuo Min Tang. Those events decisively influenced the development at Wuhan from the very beginning. Left militarism began to assert itself decisively on the situation.

The real rival to Chiang Kai-shek appeared on the scene in the person of Tang Shen-chi. The latter aspired for the supreme command of the nationalist forces. Wuhan had been captured by the army under his command. With that achievement to his credit, he resented that the supreme command of the nationalist forces should still belong to Chang Kai-shek who had until then rendered such a poor account of military talent. On the other hand, the stormy development of mass movement had encouraged the petit-bourgeois radicals to make a bid for regaining power. Finally, there was the personal ambition of the Commissioners themselves. On arriving at Wuhan, they found the situation very favourable for themselves to assume supreme power, instead of acting as the deputies of an

incipient military dictator. But the decisive role for the moment was played by the Communists who had again become the dominating factor of the situation. They had not forgotten the past record of Chiang Kai-shek. The latter was certain to turn upon them as soon as he had realised his scheme. So the Communists agreed to support the rivals of Chiang Kai-shek irrespective of their social complexion. That was another fatal mistake on their part.

The developing struggle against Chiang Kai-shek had a social basis. It was obscured by the intervention of the factors of personal ambition and factional rivalry. Instead of getting involved in the superficial aspects of the struggle, the Communists should have stood firmly on the basis of class conflict. Their policy in that period of transition should have been to narrow down the social basis of the revolutionary coalition; to give the fullest support to petitbourgeois radicalism as against the agents of the right wing and of feudal reaction; and to demand the arming of the masses in return for that support. That policy would have forced the impending split of the Kuo Min Tang on the line of class conflict; Jacobinism, suppressed at Canton, might have revived with greater vigour in conditions much more favourable; and the success of the Nationalist Democratic Revolution would have been practically assured.

Unfortunately, the Communists adopted an opportunist policy which bore striking resemblance to the traditions of the Kuo Min Tang, as if close association with the Kuo Min Tang had obscured the vision of the Communist Party. It entered into an alliance with elements whose counter-revolutionary character was evident either from record or from a critical analysis of the possible motives. Neither a representative of the compradore bourgeoisie, as Sun Fo had repeatedly proved himself to be, nor a youthful banker like T.V. Soong, nor again a defender of feudalism personified in Tang Shen-chi, could possibly be honestly interested in a struggle against the feudal-bourgeois bloc conspiring against the revolution.

The Communists could not have possibly failed to surmise the objective of Chiang Kai-shek. Yet, they did not take the initative of fomenting a revolt against him as soon as the necessary forces were available. Borodin distrusted Chiang Kai-shek. He also failed to see that the boldness of leading the revolutionary democratic masses in a frontal attack upon incipient military dictatorship was the only guarantee against the impending disaster. Instead of basing the fight

for the overthrow of the would-be dictator upon the revolutionary mass movement, he sought to carry it on through the instrumentality of an opportunist combination of elements who were no less hostile to the revolution than Chiang Kai-shek. The Kuo Min Tang was split not as the result of the process of differentiation between the revolutionary and reactionary classes composing it. It broke into two factions both of which inherited everything from the mother organisation. In the place of one, there arose two nationalist combinations, both essentially feudal-bourgeois in social composition, the superficial difference being a thin veneer of bankrupt petit-bourgeois radicalism on the part of one. Swearing by the reactionary principles of Sun Yat-sen, both were not only hostile to the revolutionary mass movement but were opposed to the development of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. For a Chiang Kai-shek in one camp, the other could boast of a Tang Shen-chi.

At the time of his return to politics, Chian-Kai-shek was suspected of Communist sympathy. Before long, he surprised uncritical observers by a sudden change of front. He rose to power as the crusader against Communism. He distinguished himself as a defender of pure Sun Yat-senism which he maintained could flourish only upon the corpses of the Communists. Finally, he was beginning the massacre of the workers and peasants whose reuolutionary action had made the spectacular nationalist successes possible. His rival, Tang Shen-chi, could also boast of a career no less chequered. Until recently a youthful lieutenant of the feudal war-lord Wu Pei-fu, he revolted against his chief to be the paramount ruler of the rich province of Hunan under the shadow of the "White Sun on the Blue Sky".[1] In order to win the support of the peasantry for the realisation of his personal ambition, he had subscribed to the programme of the Kuo Min Tang, which promised the peasants some amelioration of the unbearable conditions of their existence. He had permitted the Communists to organise in his province hundreds of thousands of peasants in unions which threatened to be the local organs of political power. He had even gone farther, and actually expressed his desire to join the Communist Party. Besides being a fervent adept to the principles of Sun Yat-sen, he was an orthodox Buddhist. While utilising the mass movement for his personal aggrandisement, particularly for overthrowing his rival from power, he connived with his lieutenants who were preparing for the massacre

of the working class.

Behind those two military leaders, there were to be found, in both the camps, representatives of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie, reactionary feudal lords and conservative patriarchal literati. C. C. Woo, in one camp, could vie with Sun Fo, in the distinction of a veteran right-winger who had always opposed revolution. The youthful Wampoa cadet Pai Sung-chi, on the one side, could be well matched by a Ho Chien, on the other. Both eventually demonstrated their military ability by massacring the working class, one in Shanghai and the other in Wuhan. The elder statesman, a rich compradore, Chang Ceingkiang, adding authority to the ambition of Chiang Kai-shek, could be admirably paired off with the old Buddha of Wuhan, Tang Yen-kai. The comparison could be continued very far, showing the artificial nature of the split which took place on the back-ground of a sharpening class struggle.

Wuhan's claim to leftism was primarily due to its acceptance of the leadership of Wang Chin-wei who, the year before, had been driven out of the country by Chiang Kai-shek. The same bunch of opportunist feudal-bourgeois politicians who had supported the counter-revolutionary venture of Chiang Kai-shek, now became the sponsors of the "left wing" and acclaimed Wang Chin-wei as the saviour of China, the faithful standard-bearer of Sun Yat-senism. The demand for the return of Wang Chin-wei, however, was not put forward by the turn-coat leaders of the Wuhan group. For enlisting the support of petit-bourgeois radicalism to secure the success of the North Expedition, the right-wing Central Executive Committee had resolved already at Canton to request Wang Chin-wei to come back to assume the leadership of the party. The same resolution directed the arch-reactionary Chang Ching-kiang to go abroad to bring Wang Chin-wei back home. The hypocritical nature of that resolution was exposed by the fact that the envoy remained where he was—at the head of the party. But for the masses, the resolution would have been forgotten, and Wang Chin-wei would never have returned home. For him personally, it might have been more convenient. He returned only to go into exile again, more discredited than ever. But the logic of revolutionary development demanded complete discredit of petit-bourgeois radicalism. The revolution could not develop farther unless the bubble of Sun Yat-senism was burst. The tragic debacle of Wang Chin-wei was necessary for the liberation of the forces of

revolution from the illusion about the principles of Sun Yat-sen. Not only did the masses worship Sun Yat-sen as their saviour, the petit-bourgeois neo-Confucian ideology contained in the San Min principles surreptitiously influenced even the Communist Party.

The real demand for the return of Wang Chin-wei came from the masses. The demand was first put forward hi a manifesto issued from Canton on February 27, 1926 on behalf of the Communist Party, supported by a number of other democratic and working class organisations. The object of the move was to sharpen the conflict inside the Kuo Min Tang on class lines, to push the petit-bourgeois radicals to assume the leadership of the process of rallying the revolutionary democratic masses still under the banner of the Kuo Min Tang and thus isolate the feudal-bourgeois right wing conspiring against the revolution.[1] But it was too late. The Communist Party had not acted in time. The opportunist alliance was already concluded at Wuhan, with the fraudulent label of the left wing. The masses, however, responded with enthusiasm, and the demand for the return of Wang Chin-wei became the popular slogan throughout the nationalist territory. That demand was a challenge to Chiang Kai-shek, a challenge much more powerful than the petty intrigues of the clique of politicians at Wuhan.

Since in the beginning they did not have the slightest idea of revolting against Chiang Kai-shek, the politicians at Wuhan had not initiated the movement demanding the return of Wang Chin-wei. They joined the movement against Chiang Kai-shek only when they saw that it opened before them the road to power. But even in that hesitant move, the initiative was taken by Tang Shen-chi, who acted not out of any revolutionary motive, but to promote his personal ambition. He compelled the Wuhan group to join the anti-Chiang movement which, however, was an expression of the popular sentiment of the moment.

Ever since the *coup d'etat* of Match 20, the masses regarded Chiang Kai-shek with suspicion. During the campaign in Kiangsi, his officers began to show their ugly teeth to the revolutionary workers and peasants. That news spread quickly throughout the nationalist territory. Taking advantage of the situation, Tang Shen-chi's agents began the agitation to stir up feelings against his rival. The movement began in Hunan which was completely under Tang Shen-chi's control. The revolutionary task of the moment was to resist

the striving of the feudal-bourgeois right wing to stop the revolution, and to frustrate Chiang Kai-shek's scheme to set up a military dictatorship. Although working with their own selfish purpose, Tang Shen-chi's agents, fomenting the anti-Chiang movement, objectively helped the accomplishment of the revolutionary task of the moment. The movement spread rapidly. Chiang was accused of violating the party authority.

Even then, the Wuhan leaders, though engaged in secret intrigues, outwardly maintained a non-committal attitude. But their hands were forced. Chiang Kai-shek's army was on the point of entering Shanghai after having allowed the retreating Northern militarists time enough to massacre the revolutionary workers, whose heroic vanguard-action made the nationalist occupation of the city possible. The democratic masses throughout the country were shocked by that shameful betrayal of the Shanghai workers. Feelings ran very high at Wuhan. Suddenly, one morning there appeared on the walls of the city placards denouncing the Commander-in-Chief of the Nationalist Army as a traitor to the party, and calling for his overthrow. The bomb burst at a very opportune moment. The Wuhan leaders were afraid that their chief would presently demand an account of their behaviour, now that he was out of the woods, crowned with the most brilliant achievement of the North Expedition. He would not believe that they could be innocent, while such a powerful movement was developing against him at Wuhan.

The open denunciation of Chiang Kai-shek and the declaration of war against him burned the bridge behind the intriguing Wuhan group. In that precarious situation, those camouflaged agents of the feudal-bourgeois right wing had no other alternative; they put on the war-paint of left radicalism. They had already betrayed their chief. While he had been labouring under the handicap of a none too successful military operation, the commissioners of the Central Executive Committee, sent to Wuhan as his agents, had conspired to remove him from power. They had allied themselves with his military rival in a secret plot to oust him. Those intrigues were not altogether unknown. Therefore, Chiang Kai-shek would not believe them even if they hesitated to associate themselves with the open declaration of war against him. As a matter of fact, suspecting treachery on the part of the commissioners at Wuhan, Chiang had set up his rival nationalist centre at Nanchang—the headquarters of

his army. There he gathered around himself a number of Central Executive Committee members including such prominent and authoritative figures as the chairman of the party himself, the venerable Tan Yen-kai and the widow of Sun Yat-sen. In addition, he was, of course, backed up by the outspoken right-wing leaders who had never recognised the authority of the Canton Central Executive Committee.

As against that imposing combination, the Wuhan group could not muster a quorum for a meeting of the Central Executive Committee. Had it not been for the presence of a considerable military force commanded by Tang Shen-chi, controlling the important provinces of Hunan and Hupeh, the struggle would not have gone to the extent of a split. Tang Shen-chi was so firmly established at Wuhan that, should Chiang Kai-shek approve of the establishment of the Nationalist Government there, as originally planned by the resolution of the highest party organ, he would be compelled to submit to a political leadership which, though not more friendly to the revolution than himself, was no longer under his domination. In that situation, he could not act according to the resolution of the Central Executive Committee. That would mean for him foregoing the position he had acquired by the *coup d'etat* of March 20.

On the other hand, the commissioners sent to Wuhan could not retrace their step in the hope of regaining the confidence of the chief they had betrayed. So, both the sides were forced to go farther and farther away from each other, although politically there was so little difference. The rivalry between Chiang Kai-shek and Tang Shen-chi for power was the decisive factor of the situation. The real issue of the situation was overshadowed by political intrigue centred around that rivalry. The influx of left militarists shattered the Kuo Min Tang to pieces. Notwithstanding the short period of revolutionary experience, it would not break away from its own tradition. It reverted to the old policy of military combinations, a policy never abandoned completely.

The Communist Party was accused of fomenting the agitation against Chiang Kai-shek. Unfortunately, the Communist Party, in so far as it was represented by its top leaders, did not deserve the accusation. They had not taken the initiative in the struggle against Chiang Kai-shek. It was done in spite of their opposition, and the movement developed spontaneously. Had the Communists acted

otherwise, the movement could not be used as a means for the promotion of personal ambition, and it would have developed in an entirely different direction. In that case also, the Kuo Min Tang would have split. The split was inevitable. It was necessary. It was a condition for the further development of the revolution. The split resulting from the development in a different d irection would have meant purging out of the ranks of the Kuo Min Tang all the counterrevolutionary feudal-bourgeois elements. That would not be its destruction, but its second re-birth, this time as a compact alliance of all the revolutionary democratic forces, namely, the urban petit-bourgeoisie, the peasantry and the proletariat. Indeed, the new party rising out of that possible and necessary split would have been Kuo Min Tang only in name.

By supporting the demand for the return of Wang Chin-wei, the Communist Party did raise the question about the future of Chiang Kai-shek. But it failed to press the issue further—to the point where it would be understood by the masses. The struggle against Chiang Kai-shek was the revolutionary task of the moment. He was not an individual. His was not a personal ambition. He represented a class; and his ambition to military dictatorship represented the striving of an entire class to stop the revolution. Therefore, further development of the revolution was bound to coincide with the struggle for the overthrow of Chiang Kai-shek. As the leader of the revolutionary democratic masses, the Communist Party should have initiated that phase of the struggle. Unfortunately, it let the leadership slip out of its hand, and fall in the hand of Tang Shen-chi, who converted the struggle of the revolutionary democracy against feudal-bourgeoisie reaction into a struggle between two individuals. Consequently, the return of Wang Chin-wei lost all revolutionary significance. He returned into an atmosphere of political intrigues, dominated by the military dictatorship of Tang Shen-chi. To rise above such an atmosphere, was not in the power of petit-bourgeois radicalism.

The events leading up to the establishment of two rival Nationalist Governments showed clearly that the split of the Kuo Min Tang did not take place along the line of social cleavage widened by the results of the North Expedition. The split was but a temporary discord in the camp of feudal-bourgeois reaction. It did not take place upon the establishment of the Nationalist Government at

Wuhan. As a matter of fact, the Nationalist Government was established at Wuhan according to a formal resolution of the Central Executive Committee of the Kuo Min Tang, dominated by the right wing and controlled by Chiang Kai-shek. The latter himself visited Wuhan soon after the commissioners had reached there and the Government had been formally established. The Wuhan Government entered into international negotiations. It was recognised by foreign Powers as the *de facto* Government of China. In December 1926, the remaining members of the Central Executive Committee left Canton for Wuhan. Previous to that, Chiang Kai-shek had visited the new centre, and returned with grave suspicion about the behaviour of his colleagues there. He planned to test the loyalty of his associates. On the way to Wuhan, the Central Executive Committee visited the headquarters of the Nationalist Army at Nanchang. On that occasion, Chiang Kai-shek persuaded the chairman of the party to call a meeting of the Central Executive Committee there. Tang Shen-chi, on his side, suspected that the plan of his rival was to move the nationalist centre away from Wuhan. He naturally did not want that to happen. He countered Chiang's move by fomenting the agitation against him. On the other hand, he instigated the commissioners at Wuhan to stiffen up their back in view of the fact that they constituted the Nationalist Government which had already received the *de facto* recognition of foreign Powers. Why should they surrender that position of advantage and return under the domination of Chiang Khai-shek? The commissioners contended that the proper place for the meeting of the Central Executive Committee was Wuhan, which had been declared the new nationalist headquarters by its own resolution. Tang Shen-chi encouraged them by placing his military forces at their disposal. Left militarism functioned as the decisive factor of the situation. The Nationalist Government became an instrument for the realisation of Tang Shen-chi's personal ambition.

When it became evident that the commissioners at Wuhan had betrayed him by allying themselves with his rival for power with the object of overthrowing him, Chiang Kai-shek declared Nanchang to be the real Nationalist Centre. The feudal-bourgeois reaction was rent asunder by internal squabbles. Each side accused the other of violating the authority of the party. The Nanchang fraction entered into surreptitious negotiations with the Northern militarists and foreign Imperialism. Although some of their trusted representatives

such as Sun Fo, T. V. Soong, etc.. were important members of the Wuhan Government, the Shanghai bourgeoisie favoured the Nanchang group. They were confident that the prodigals of Wuhan would repent sooner or later, and return to the family-fold. Upon the settlement of the delicate question regarding the occupation of Shanghai, it was no longer necessary for Chiang Kai-shek to temporise. He was the chosen one of the Shanghai bourgeoisie; they had recommended him to foreign Imperialism. With such powerful backing, Chiang felt his position to be secure. He declared war against Wuhan, and established a new Nationalist Government at Nanking.

The Wuhan group retorted by dismissing him from the post of the Commander-in-Chief of the Nationalist Army, and expelling him from the party. But the significance of that retort depended on what was meant by the Nationalist Army and the Kuo Min Tang. A simple resolution could not deprive one of the command of an army, so long as it remained loyal to him. The resolution would have had great significance, had it provided for the creation of a new military force by arming the revolutionary workers and peasants. That it did not. Consequently, the real significance of the resolution was to place the Wuhan group—party as well as the Government—under the control of the military forces of Tang Shen-chi, instead of those of Chiang Kai-shek. The change did not touch the essentials of the situation. Indeed, it was rather a change for the worse.

Chiang Kai-shek represented the bourgeoisie. The military dictator of Wuhan was a feudal militarist trying to fish in troubled waters. As regards his position in the party, Chiang Kai-shek could not possibly be expelled from the Kuo Min Tang, so long as it remained the political organ of the class he represented. Instead of being expelled, he simply took the party along with himself. The Wuhan group claimed to act upon the authority of the Kuo Min Tang and the principles of Sun Yat-sen; but on the very same authority, it was declared an outlaw by its rival. The expulsion of Chiang Kai-shek was meaningless, unless it meant the expulsion of the bourgeoisie from the Kuo Min Tang. In other words, the expulsion would have had a far-reaching significance, if it marked the beginning of the process of transformation of the Kuo Min Tang into a revolutionary democratic party waging war upon feudal-bourgeois reaction as well as foreign Imperialism. That was not the case. The "left" Kuo Min Tang of Wuhan represented a precarious coalition of

the bankrupt petit-bourgeois radicals and opportunist feudal militarists; ambitious agents of the reactionary big bourgeoisie also participated in it.

The squabble over the authority of the party soon subsided. There was a much greater issue. It was the old question of the relationship with the Communist Party. In other words, it was the question concerning the social basis of the political party to lead the Nationalist Democratic Revolution. It was the vital question about the future of the revolution. Confronted with that question, all those who were opposed to a further development of the revolution could not weaken themselves by mutual quarrel. Therefore, they must compose their differences, to be powerful enough for attacking the forces of revolution which had been growing in the meantime.

From the point of view of the bourgeoisie, the object of the North Expedition was to free the Nationalist Government from the revolutionary influence of the democratic masses. The fundamental political questions of class relations and of the leadership of the revolution presented themselves in the acutest form upon the completion of the Expedition in the military sense. The revolutionary democratic forces had grown tremendously in course of the Expedition undertaken with the object of freeing the Nationalist Government from their dangerous influence. Since the bourgeoisie could not run away from the spectre of revolution, it became necessary for them to take the bull by the horn, if the dreaded danger was to be avoided. The counter-revolutionary task of the moment was to break the power of the working class which, in course of the struggle, had captured the leadership of the democratic masses. Chiang Kai-shek accused the Wuhan group not only of usurping the party authority; the main charge was that the Wuhan group was acting under the influence of the Communists. To impress the native bourgeoisie and foreign Imperialism with his distinction from his rivals at Wuhan, Chiang Kai-shek began a ferocious attack upon the working class, and violently severed relations with the Soviet Union, whose generous help had contributed so much to his military success.

The disruption of the united anti-imperialist nationalist front, represented by the Kuo Min Tang, did not result from the squabble for power among the various factions of feudal-bourgeois reaction. The real split took place in one camp as well as in the other. The

only difference was that Chiang Kai-shek violently broke the alliance with the working class a few weeks earlier than his rivals did at Wuhan. The expression of the real split was the bloody suppression by Chiang Kai-shek of the revolutionary democratic movement at Shanghai, as well as the massacre of the workers and peasants by the Generals at Wuhan. While Chiang Kai-shek based his campaign against the Wuhan group mainly on the allegation that the latter was acting as the instrument of the Communists, the Wuhan group fought him on the flimsy issue of party authority. The vertical cleft, created by the lack of cohesion in the camp of counter-revolution, closed up in proportion as the irreparable horizontal cleavage widened.

The feudal-bourgeois elements in both the camps closed up their ranks, to turn ferociously upon the democratic masses, particularly upon the revolutionary working class. The anti-imperialist coalition of classes formed in 1924, on the platform of the reorganised Kuo Min Tang, was broken up by the bourgeoisie who, terrified by the spectre of revolution, closed up their ranks to face the common danger represented by the revolutionary democratic masses. Personal ambitions, group interest, and the intervention of left militarism, created discord in the ranks of the bourgeoisie. But the Kuo Min Tang split only when the coalition of classes represented by it broke down. The conflict of class interest, sharpened by the stormy development of the mass movement, rendered the old coalition untenable. It was bound to break up. It had served its purpose. The future of the revolution depended upon how the inevitable break happened. The leadership, until then vested in the coalition, might be captured by the class which had the courage to take the offensive first. It was evident that the capture of the leadership by the bourgeoisie would mean a setback for the revolution. Therefore, its further development demanded offensive on the part of the revolutionary classes. Objective conditions were all favourable for the offensive. Unfortunately, the vanguard wavered, giving the enemy time to manoeuvre for a strategic position from which they delivered a fierce attack before long. The Communist Party got involved in the factional squabbles amongst the reactionaries. It permitted the real issue of the situation to be pushed to the background. While quarrelling among themselves, the feudal-bourgeois elements in both the camps prepared for the real split. It took place before long, they taking the offensive. Having failed to attack when in a favourable position, the working class was easily

beaten, and the revolutionary democratic masses were left without any leadership in that critical moment.

The net result of the North Expedition was complete capture of the Kuo Min Tang by the bourgeoisie hi alliance with the feudal militarists. The Kuo Min Tang thereupon ceased to be the organ of a revolutionary struggle against foreign Imperialism and native reaction. But at the same time, the revolutionary democratic masses had been so well mobilised as to throw up a new leadership. To the Kuo Min Tang was allotted the shameful role of fighting the very force which, only a few years ago, had rescued it from the morass of political bankruptcy. Consequently, it became the party of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie allied with feudalism, acting as the willing tool of foreign Imperialism. The Kuo Min Tang did not split. Its revolutionary role played out, it was destroyed by the contradiction of its social composition and ideological outlook.

Notes

1. The Emblem of the Kuo Min Tang.

2. The move was suggested and the manifesto drafted by the author of this book who had arrived at Canton earlier in the year as the representative of the Communist International; The Canton Committee of the Communist Party was very reluctant to take the step, because even then the Communists did not think that it would be wise to oppose Chiang Kai-shek openly.

CHAPTER XVII

THE GREAT CRISIS

In the beginning of 1927, events happened in China with an amazing rapidity. The situation was as exciting as it was bewildering. The eyes of the world were fixed upon China. The world was staggered by the stormy development in one of its vast back-waters. Within eight months, ten out of the twenty-one provinces were brought under the authority of the Nationalist Government whose jurisdiction, before that short period of time, had been confined to the southern-most province of Kwangtung. The territory newly acquired by the Nationalist Government was well over half a million square miles in area, and had a population of about two hundred millions. A number of other provinces, though not yet directly under its authority, owed allegiance to it. The nationalist flag flew over the entire Yangtse Valley—the main economic artery of the country. Large and well-equipped armies, commanded by such redoubtable war-lords as Wu Pei-fu, Sun Chuan-fang and Chang Tsung-

chang, were beaten by the Nationalist Army which possessed hardly a piece of heavy artillery. The whole achievement seemed to be a miracle. How did it happen?

The sleeping giant was awake. The miracle was performed by the masses. With their enthusiastic support, the Nationalist Government had established a solid base at Kwangtung. On the strength of the same revolutionary force, the Nationalist Army reached the Yangtse Valley with the irresistible momentum of a tidal wave. It was again the revolutionary action of the masses which created the new base of the nationalist power by a successful frontal attack upon foreign Imperialism at Hankow. The capture of the British Concession in that city was an act unprecedented in the history of China's relation with foreign Powers. None even dreamt until then that such an event

could ever take place in China. But a new force had appeared on the scene; it could defy gun-boats and landing parties. It was the revolutionary enthusiasm and energy of the masses.

Ever since 1919, the face of China had been changing in consequence of the appearance of the new force. In many battles against native reaction and foreign Imperialism, it had tried its mettle and gained momentum. Finally, it performed the miracle which amazed the world. Not only in Hankow, but right in Shanghai also it was demonstrated how the revolutionary determination of the masses could defy the greatest danger. When hundreds of imperialist guns from scores of battle-ships were levelled against that economic heart of China to keep the Nationalist Army away, it was again the proletariat which placed itself at the forefront of the battle, and led the democratic masses to a glorious victory.

In that situation, it was evident that further development of the situation in the spring of 1927 was conditional upon the nature of the relationship between the Nationalist Government and the revolutionary masses. Will the former have the courage to continue wielding the formidable weapon which had performed such miracles? That was the supreme question of the moment.

The nationalists had scored a great victory; but it was only the beginning. A defeat bad been inflicted upon the first lines of the enemy; the enemy was in disgrace, but still far from being destroyed. Indeed, military victory had brought the nationalists to a situation which was beset with the grave danger of hostile forces operating within their own ranks. The operation of those sinister forces had already been evident in the discord and rivalry among the nationalist leaders. The awakening of the masses had decomposed the social basis of reaction; but the latter was smuggling itself in the nationalist movement with the object of corrupting it. The age-long social stagnation was disturbed; an undermined social structure had been held together in a precarious, fossilised form by force of habit; at last it was rudely shaken; the ground was prepared for the final collapse. A decisive blow must be dealt. That was the essence, and the fundamental task of the situation in the beginning of 1927.

It was an illusion to believe that militarism was destroyed. The monster thrived upon deep-rooted social evils. They still remained intact. They could not be eradicated by simply driving the mercenary

hordes of Wu Pei-fu across the Yangtse. China could never rid herself of Wu Pei-fu and his likes until the social conditions which enabled them to raise an army as if by hat-trick were not radically cured. The battle must be waged ruthlessly in the numberless villages, where the roots of militarism were struck deep in the structure of a decayed society. The established social relations meant unrestricted exploitation, expropriation and pauperisation of the peasant masses. So long as those relations remained in force, the hydra-head of the monster of militarism was sure to reappear soon in another place after it was struck down in one. The armies of the war-lords had been routed before the onslaught of the nationalist forces; but militarism was smuggling itself into the nationalist ranks.

The victory over Imperialism was equally deceptive. Unexpectedly attacked by the masses, Imperialism had only beaten a strategic retreat, to prepare for a counter-offensive. The collapse of the armies of the war-lords had brought the nationalists face to face with the forces of Imperialism. The danger of open foreign intervention was imminent. Without the formality of declaring a war, international Imperialism had blockaded the coast of China. Shanghai was guarded by a formidable array of foreign fleets. Hongkong harboured dozens of transport ships carrying an army of invasion. The Philippines and Singapore loomed menacingly in the offing as the bases of possible naval operations on a large scale. Japan stood near at hand, ready to strike as soon as the sanction of Anglo-American Imperialism was available. The Yangtse, as far as it was navigable, was littered with battle-ships large and small. One tenth of the naval forces concentrated at Wuhan alone would be enough to demolish the nationalist headquarters in a few hours.

Behind the imposing demonstration of the mailed fist, Imperialism also sought to corrupt and decompose the Nationalist Government of Wuhan by the lure of diplomatic recognition. On the other hand, Japanese agents surreptitiously visited the headquarters of Chiang kai-shek. On Japanese initiative, some right-wing Kuo Min Tang leaders met representatives of Northern militarism secretly in Peking. Plans for the occupation of Shanghai, jointly by the southern and northern forces, were being canvassed. At the same time, American Imperialism pressed the scheme of "neutralising Shanghai"—a scheme which signified nothing less than the annexation of the economic metropolis of China by international Imperialism. But all the aggressive schemes of Imperialism were frustrated by the

bold action of the democratic masses organised on the initiative of the revolutionary proletariat. The occupation of Shanghai by the nationalist forces had to be ostensibly conceded.

But there could be no doubt that the nationalists were allowed to enter Shanghai only when they agreed to respect the privileged position of foreign Imperialism. The masses had dealt a severe blow to the prestige of Imperialism. But its power was not yet broken. The power of Imperialism in China was based upon the monopolist control of the entire economic life of the country. For defending its position of privilege, Imperialism would readily utilise a new weapon if the old broke down irreparably. Failing to crush the revolutionary mass movement with the old instrument of native militarism, the imperialist Powers did not mind seeking alliance with the nationalist bourgeoisie on condition that the latter would turn against the revolution. Open armed intervention was a questionable policy.

In the beginning of 1927, China was the scene of a mass movement enormously more potential than its predecessors—the Taiping Revolt and the Boxer Uprising. It was no longer an elemental upheaval with primitive democratic tendencies; nor was it a blind fury against foreign aggression. It was a consciously revolutionary movement with a definite social objective to be reached through the realisation of a clearly formulated political programme. It was a revolutionary movement of the masses, led by a party, revolutionary in ideology, compact in organisation and resolute in struggle. That was the Communist Party.

In such a condition, armed intervention by foreign Powers could only be a threat. It was easy to terrorise the nationab'st bourgeoisie. But the threat failed to have any effect on the masses. The latter attacked the very roots of imperialist power, just when formidable forces were marshalled for defending it. Knowing that the power of Imperialism was based upon its monopoly over the economic life of the country, the Communist Party demanded not only the abrogation of unequal treaties and confiscation of Concessions, but went further to demand nationalisation of the railways, mines, heavy industries and banks, all mostly owned by foreigners. The struggle for national freedom developed into an attack upon Capitalism. The development was naturally not to the liking of the nationalist bourgeoisie. Imperialism was quick to detect the cleavage in the nationalist ranks, and sought to drive a wedge with the object of widening it. It dec-

lared its readiness to compromise with the nationalist bourgeoisie. That policy proved more effective than armed intervention.

Until then, the democratic masses were the backbone, the driving-force of the nationalist movement which, nevertheless, still remained under the leadership of the bourgeoisie. The more the working class pushed forward, the more the nationalist bourgeoisie inclined towards a compromise with Imperialism. Finally, the critical point was reached. The military victories for the nationalists exposed how the ground really lay. China could be rid of the curse of militarism only by clearing away the ugly ruins of feudal-patriarchal reaction. On the other hand, her struggle for freedom from imperialist domination inevitably involved a struggle against Capitalism. The nationalist struggle was inter-connected with class struggle. Therefore, remaining faithful to the principles of Sun Yat-sen, the Kuo Min Tang could no longer lead the struggle for national freedom. Anxious to see that the sacred home of Confucious was not soiled by the reality of class struggle, the Kuo Min Tang betrayed the Nationalist Revolution. The revolution could be betrayed; but the realities that produced it mocked at the principles of Sun Yat-sen and exposed the imbecility of his followers. At the behest of the Kuo Min Tang, the masses could not relapse into the slumber of servitude after they had suffered, sacrificed, fought and won in dozens of battles during the years of revolutionary development. They stood faithfully by the revolution, determined to strike at the roots of native reaction and foreign Imperialism, even when the nationalist bourgeoisie feared, wavered, compromised and capitulated.

Military success and territorial expansion brought the nationalists up against the social problems which could no longer be evaded if the revolution was to go farther. It became evident that the nationalist democratic revolution—the overthrow of imperialist domination and destruction of militarism—was identical with an agrarian revolution. Thanks to the nationalist movement identifying itself with the revolutionary awakening of the masses, militarism had been dealt a heavy blow, and the privileges of Imperialism challenged seriously for the first time. The revolutionary awakening of the masses was a revolt against social conditions which produced militarism served the purpose of imperialist domination. That being the case, the immediate task of the nationalist revolution in the spring of 1927 was evident. It was to make a clean sweep of the ruins of the

feudal-partiarchal social system. That was not an extraordinary task. It is the basic task of a bourgeois democratic revolution to abolish feudalism and any other form of pre-capitalist production. But in China, the nationalist bourgeoisie shrunk before that historic task. While still in Kwangtung, they had deferred the solution of the agrarian! problem on the pretext that in the stuggle against Imperialism the united nationalist front should be formed on the broadest possible social basis. It was then argued that the Kuo Min Tang would lose the support of the landowning classes, should it hurry to put in practice its programme of agrarian reform. That anxiety to retain the support of the landowning classes was unwarranted because the nationalist revolution had never really had it, nor could it ever expect to have it.

The Kuo Min Tang had entered into an alliance with the feudal militarists before it was transformed into an organ of revolutionary struggle by the awakening of the masses. Its old allies declared war upon it as soon as it came under the influence of revolutionary dem-cracy. In Canton, the Nationalist Government had to defend itself constantly against the intrigues and open revolts of feudal reactionaries. Since feudal relations obstructed the free development of capitalist production and trade, it was strange that the bourgeoisie should be so reluctant to disrupt them. The reason for that reluctance was that in China the bourgeoisie themselves were very closely connected with forms of exploitation taking place under feudal relations.

The awakening of the rural masses was but remotely connected with the struggle against Imperialism. Directly, it heralded an attack upon the feudal landlords and the whole system of semi-capitalist rural economy. The outstanding feature of the national economy of China is the subordination of largely pre-capitalist modes of production to the highest form of capitalist exploitation, through trade. In that system of national economy, foreign Imperialism, the native trader, the village shopkeeper, the rural usurer, the landlord, the State official and the militarist, are so many links in the long chain which binds the Chinese masses to their servitude. Thanks to the prevailing system of landownership, under which rents and taxes are still paid largely in kind, practically the entire surplus produce accumulates in the hand of the landowner who, together with the State official and village usurer, exercises monopoly over the entire national economy.

The situation is rendered still worse by the fact that often all these three functions—of landlord, trader and usurer—are united in the self-same person. Being mostly engaged in trade, the Chinese bourgeoisie can hardly be expected to tread on the toes of the mighty landlord. They derive their profit from the traffic in commodities produced under the conditions of a decayed social order. Therefore, they could not be any less averse to its subversion that the feudal-patriarchal-militarist corporation monopolising rural economy. The bourgeoisie join the revolt against feudalism when they are connected only with the capitalist mode of production. Operating with trades capital, they are bound to be allies of feudal reaction.

On the other hand, the Chinese bourgeoisie are connected also with imperialist exploitation. The compradores (middle-men in wholesale trade) and the bankers in the treaty ports are agents of imperialist finance. They never joined the nationalist movement. The industrial bourgeoisie are very weak and small numerically. Moreover, even they are controlled by foreign banks. Nevertheless, Imperialism being primarily responsible for the industrial backwardness of China, the interests of the Chinese industrial bourgeoisie are objectively antagonistic to it. Since pre-capitalist social conditions restrict free economic development of the country, the industrial bourgeoisie would also welcome their abolition. But they are too weak to lead a revolution, demanded by the interests of their class. In the beginning, they sympathised with, and materially supported, the democratic movement. Then the working class entered the scene.

Oppressed, on the one hand, by imperialist finance, and handicapped on the other by the pre-capitalist nature of the national economy, modern industry in China counts upon only one favourable factor. It is the extremely cheap labour. The awakening of the working class threatened to deprive it also of that advantage, at least partially. In the beginning, the awakening had a distinctly nationalist complexion. The strikes were mostly in concerns owned by foreigners. Modern industries and transport in China, being mostly owned by foreign capital, the striving of the working class for some improvement of the intolerable conditions of their life was primarily an attack upon foreign Imperialism. In course of the development of the movement, the attack grew stronger, until it assailed the very foundation of Imperialism by demanding the nationalisation of railways, basic industries and banks The awakening of the working class was

the commencement of the inevitable struggle between capital and labour. When the Chinese workers began the struggle to secure greater value for their labour, they could not discriminate between foreign capital and native capital. The nationalist complexion faded away in proportion as the essential class character of the movement became evident.

With the nationalist bourgeoisie also, class interest predominated national interest. The industrial bourgeoisie began to disassociate themselves from the nationalist movement in proportion as it became revolutionary in consequence of the awakening of the working class. The anxiety for immediate sectional interest made them blind to the much greater benefit that might accrue to their class from the victory of the revolution. Foreign Imperialism and native reaction militated against the broad interest of their class. The awakening of the working class represented an attack upon both those factors. Therefore, enlightened self-interest should have persuaded the industrial bourgeoisie to ally with the working class. But they failed to do so. They acted on the principle that a bird in hand was worth more than two in the bush. Better find some guarantee for the present profit, with the expectation of increasing it eventually than run the risk of a revolution. When they were required to define their attitude towards the working class, the industrial bourgeoisie made their decision. They joined hands with foreign Imperialism and native reaction in order to arrest the development of the Nationalist Democratic Revolution.

Developing on the background of such complicated relations of classes, the Chinese Revolution found itself in a great crisis in the spring of 1927. Already Kwangtung, contradictions inside the nationalist ranks had become manifest. The Kuo Min Tang was even then confronted with the social tasks of the revolution. It launched upon the policy of avoiding the task by diverting the attention of the masses to the secondary issues of military victory and territorial expansion. But the revolution could not be separated from its social tasks. Military victory, territorial expansion, political unity were but means to the solution of its basic social task. The task of a revolution is to lay the foundation of a new social order, and for that purpose clear away the ruins of the old. In the spring of 1927, it became evident that the programme of the bourgeois democratic revolution could not be realised in China without attacking the imme-

diate interests of the bourgeoisie. An agrarian revolution was the only weapon to eradicate militarism; a ruthless subversion of the decayed feudal-patriarchal relations was necessary for freeing national economy from pre-capitalist limitations. And development of class struggle was the only effective attack upon Imperialism. The revolution did not wait while the bourgeoisie were trying to emasculate it. The bourgeoisie having failed to lead the democratic revolution, the working class had come forward to shoulder the responsibility. That again was not something new. The condition for the success of any bourgeois revolution has always been the initiative and the pressure of the toiling masses. The difference in the case of China was that, when the working class took the initiative, the bourgeoisie turned against the revolution, instead of placing themselves on the crest of the tide as their class had done in other countries in a previous period of history. The difference was due to the social structure of the country, the intervention of an outside factor (Imperialism) and the conditions of the contemporary world. All those three causes contributed to the creation of a situation in which the bourgeois democratic revolution in China was not likely to stop by ushering in the period of capitalist development. There was the possibility of its being followed immediately by a more far-reaching social revolution.

The situation in the spring of 1927 clearly opened up the perspective of the Chinese Revolution transcending the limits of the bourgeois democratic revolution. The perspective had been visible already in "Red" Canton. The *coup d'etat* of March 20 was the first definite move of the bourgeoisie to stop the revolution. In the beginning of 1927, it was clear that, irrespective of all the efforts of the bourgeoisie, the revolution had developed in a dangerous direction. It had found a more determined and courageous leader in the working class. In that critical situation, the bourgeoisie could no longer temporise, manoeuvring for position. They had to act decisively. The issue was very clear : For or against the revolution.

The bourgeoisie turned against the revolution. Immediately upon the occupation of Shanghai, the Nationalist Army violated the alliance with the working class. Labour organisations were dissolved; their leaders were massacred; the relation with the Soviet Union was broken up; and a fierce campaign against the Communists became the dominating feature of the situation. In Wuhan the turn was not so sharp. The

attitude of the group there was influenced by the internal struggle for power which had wrecked the Kuo Min Tang. Engaged in a struggle against the rival group led by Chiang Kai-shek, the Wuhan group demagogically disapproved of his counter-revolutionary action. Consequently, in spite of the fact that its class composition and social outlook were essentially similar to those of the rival faction, it became the pivot of a revolutionary alliance.

The split left the Wuhan group with the smaller share of the gains of the North Expedition. Out of the ten provinces brought directly under nationalists, only two were practically controlled by the Wuhan Government. Its military forces were also inferior to those of the rival. Besides, the larger part of the army, formally owing allegiance to it, was commanded by Tang Shen-chi and other Generals who were very recent recruits to the nationalist cause. The leader of the opposing camp, Chiang Kai-shek, commanded an army of his own. Except one army corps, the bulk of the new military forces created at Canton went with him. Economically, the position of the Wuhan groups compared also very unfavourably with that of its rival. It could be easily blockaded from the outside world. In short, the position of Wuhan was that of a beleaguered city, like Paris in 1793. Like Paris, it also could come out of the tight corner only by holding high the standard of revolution. The situation was favourable for the purpose. The working class, nationally and internationally, supported Wuhan as against the rival group which had openly betrayed the democratic revolution; its hands were dripping with the blood of the means. Democratic and liberal world opinion was also favourable to the Wuhan group, because of its leftist pretension. Petit-bourgeois radicalism claimed Wuhan as its own. Even in the provinces controlled by its rival, the Wuhan group had the support of the democratic masses. But, on the other hand, in the internal struggle for power, it had been outmanoeuvered by the rival faction. The Wuhan group appreciated the gravity of its position. There was no way back. It must hold out somehow until fortune came. That could be done only by winning the confidence of the masses. So, it decided the play the role of left radicalism. But the days were gone when it was possible to operate with vague promises and radical phrases. The masses supported the Wuhan Government, but demanded that promises made previously be fulfilled, and radical phrases be translated into revolutionary deeds.

In the manifesto issued by the Reorganisation Conference of 1924, the Kuo Min Tang had declared: "In China today, poor peasants and over-worked labourers are to be found everywhere. The position of these two classes and their sufferings are such as provoke in them a powerful will to revolt against Imperialism. Therefore, the success of the nationalist revolution must depend upon the participation of the peasants and labourers. The position of the Kuo Min Tang is, on the one hand, to help with all its strength the economic development of the peasants and labourers, so that the effective power of the nationalist revolution be increased; and, on the other hand, to make every eflort for securing the participation of the peasants and labourers in the Kuo Min Tang, so as to speed up the advance of the nationalist revolutionary movement. For, the Kuo Min Tang is now engaged in the struggle against Imperialism and militarism—that is, against the special classes opposed to the interests of the peasants and of the labourers, and to secure their emancipation. In short, it,Js a struggle for the peasants and labourers, and it is one in which the peasants and the labourers struggle for themselves."

Three years passed since this declaration had been made. In those three years, the workers and peasants had performed their part of the contract. They had participated in the nationalist revolutionary movement, had fought every battle in the front lines, and made great sacrifices demanded of those occupying such a position. At the time of its establishment at Canton, the Nationalist Government had promised to introduce certain measures of agrarian reform. The programme was not clearly defined; but it did hold out before the peasant masses the hope that the Nationalist Government would redress some of their very burning grievances. The Nationalist Government also undertook to make laws protecting the interests of the labouring masses, guaranteeing them a minimum standard of living, and granting them liberty of organisation.

Two years later, the Second Congress of the Kuo Min Tang gave definite shape to the principles outlined in the manifesto of the Reorganisation Conference. In the meantime, the toiling masses had become conscious of their interest, and could not be satisfied only with vaguely formulated general principles. They pressed definite demands. Those demands had to be fulfilled if the Kuo Min Tang wanted to act upon the principles enunciated with the object of enlisting the support of the masses. In view of the tremendous sacrifice

made by the working class in the intervening period, the demands were very moderate. The urban workers demanded that, in the nationalist territory, they should enjoy the conditions for which they had struck in Hongkong. The Chinese employers, however, were not willing to concede to the demand. The peasants, on their part, expected that the Nationalist Government should relieve them of the illegal taxes and innumerable other forms of exaction by the village reactionaries who were always conspiring against it.

The Nationalist Government having failed to give them the promised protection, the toiling masses went to the extent of taking the law in their own hands. They felt themselves to be the masters of the situation. Without their support, the Nationalist Government could not exist for a day. They had given their support, at great sacrifice. They were conscious not only of their interest, but also of their power to enforce their demands. Terrified by that revolutionary mood of the masses, the feudal-bourgeois elements in the Kuo Min Tang began to prepare for breaking the alliance inaugurated by the Reorganisation Conference. But until a convenient way out of the situation was found, they were compelled to retain the support of the working class. Therefore, while delivering the leadership of the party back to the reactionary feudal-bourgeois right wing, the Second Congress nevertheless endorsed the demands of the masses. It was a promise made in bad faith. The enforcement of the demands of the masses was conditional on an attack upon the interests of the upper classes. While re-establishing the leadership of those classes, the Second Congress of the Kuo Min Tang could not honestly visualise an attack upon their interest.

Nevertheless, the Second Congress resolved: 1. To set up a maximum limit to landlord's rent; 2. To fix the minimum price of grains; 3. To abolish illegal taxes and vexatious exactions; 4. To prohibit the collection of rent and taxes in advance; 5. To limit the rate of interest charged by the usurer; 6. To prohibit profiteering at the cost of the peasants; and 7. To pass laws protecting the interests of the peasantry. Those measures, if introduced, would be beneficial not only to the peasantry; their introduction was necessary for the promotion of capitalism. Agriculture being the basic industry of the country, measures calculated to relieve it from the burdens of precapitalist exactions were the most elementary condition for any economic development. The peasant would have the impetus to

produce more if he was guaranteed a greater share in the produce of his labour. The increase of agricultural production, in its turn, would foment trade. The money left in the possession of the peasantry, in consequence of reduced rent, restricted feudal charges and limited usurers' due, would presently go into circulation, contributing to the increase of capitalist profit.

The resolution made political provisions for the enforcement of those economic measures. It had been found out in practice that introduction of measures beneficial for the peasantry was obstructed by the reactionary classes, all-powerful in the country-side. So the Second Congress declared that "a certain class of people who obstruct the interests of the peasants must be punished, namely, the militarists, the compradores, the corrupt bourgeoisie and the bad gentry." It was further resolved that "the armed organisations that oppress the peasants must be dissolved, the monopoly of the gentry in the local governments must be broken down, and the peasants helped to organise self-government."

Had the resolution been honestly made by the Kuo Min Tang, there would have been no occasion for the great crisis which overtook it as a result of the success of the North Expedition. If the resolution had been enforced, at least partially, during the North Expedition, the reactionary classes would have been weakened, and the Kuo Min Tang immensely strengthened by greater confidence on the part of the masses. In that case, the feudal-bourgeois right wing would not dare to attack the revolution, and the relation of classes would be overwhelmingly favourable to a further development of the revolutionary struggle.

During the campaign, the peasants everywhere attacked the social basis of militarism. The ostensible object of the North Expedition was the destruction of militarism, which was an instrument of imperialist domination and hindered the unification of the country. The revolutionary action of the peasantry was evidently helpful for the attainment of that object. The peasantry trusted that the Nationalist Army would support their revolutionary act. Had the Nationalist Army acted according to the expectation of the peasant masses, the resolution of the Kuo Min Tang would have been put into practice, an agrarian revolution would have been accomplished, militarism would have been destroyed, and a long step would have been taken towards the unification of the country under a modern democratic

State. But it was not to be so. The resolution was meant not for enforcement, but for deceiving the masses—for enlisting their support with false promises. The success of the North Expedition was due much more to the revolt of the peasantry than the valour of the Nationalist Army. Without the enthusiastic co-operation of the peasantry, the Nationalist Army could not have progressed much. Nevertheless, it failed to act as an instrument of revolution. On the contrary, before long, it was converted into a weapon which the Nationalist Government could use against the peasant masses, to hinder the execution of the programme of the Kuo Min Tang itself. The crisis was caused by the refusal of the Nationalist Government to act according to the resolution of the Kuo Min Tang.

Internal discord wrecked the Kuo Min Tang. It has been shown in the last chapter that there was no difference of view regarding the enforcement of its social programme. Both the rival groups were dominated by reactionaries equally opposed to any revolutionary measure. Nevertheless, it was in consequence of that discord, produced by factional struggle for power, that the Wuhan group was obliged to appear as the defender of the principles and traditions of the revolution, and accused the rival group of violating and betraying them. Therefore, it was at Wuhan that the crisis assumed the crassest form. The other group had logically followed up the policy inaugurated by the *coup d'etat* of March 20. It broke the alliance with the democratic masses, and made a united front with all the forces of reaction, including Imperialism, to oppose the revolution. Pretending to stand faithfully by the revolutionary alliance with the democratic masses, the Wuhan group had to face the responsibility of tackling the social tasks of the revolution. Having no honest intention of discharging that responsibility, it acted in a fraudulent manner which precipitated the crisis. The Wuhan period could be called the period of the greatest crisis of the Chinese revolution. The history of that period was damning for petit-bourgeois radical nationalism and exposed the real nature of Sun Yat-senism.

The hidden cause of the great crisis is disclosed in a book written from the point of view of the "left" Kuo Min Tang, and under the patronage of Wang Chin-wei. "In a way, the reaction in Nationalist China is but the natural consequence of the militant policy of force and direct action adopted by the peasants and workers under Communist leadership against the Chinese employers and

landlords. The seizure of land in Hunan in the months of April and May of 1927, and the outbreak of strikes in industrial centres were not only politically inexpedient, but they could be justified only by reading into the Three People's Principles a meaning which was not intended or contemplated by Sun Yat-sen. Dr. Sun realised that the basis of economic and social transformation of China is the agrarian revolution, but land distribution must be brought about by peaceful means and not by forcible confiscation; he explicitly repudiated the policy of class struggle."[1]

That is a justification of counter-revolution on the authority of Sun Yat-sen. The justification itself is made on the authority of the discredited prophet of petit-bourgeois radicalism. Wang Chin-wei was the leader of the Wuhan group. In that critical moment, there were two clear alternatives before petit-bourgeois radicalism represented by him: To liberate itself from the reactionary principles of Sun Yat-sen in order to support the masses, carrying out the resolution of the Kuo Min Tang; or to capitulate before feudal-bourgeois reaction. True to the principles of Sun Yat-sen, the petit-bourgeois nationalist radicals travelled the second road, straight into the camp of counterrevolution.

The destruction of the feudal landowning class, together with all its reactionary allies, was the first condition for the success of the nationalist democratic revolution. This statement was made in the resolution of the Kuo Min Tang itself. The Nationalist Government had failed to do anything in pursuance of that resolution. Yet, when the peasantry laid their hands on the privileges of feudal-patriarchal reaction, the "left" Nationalist Government of Wuhan rushed to the aid of the latter. It enjoined the revolutionary peasantry to wait patiently until their exploiters could be persuaded to be a little kind. Since experience could not allow the peasantry to believe any longer that their grievances would ever be redressed by a Government dominated by feudal militarists, they acted on their own initiative. They began the enforcement of the measures promised by the Kuo Mia Tang. The action of the Chinese peasantry was not unprecedented in history. An agrarian revolution never took place in a different way. The peasantry must always take the initiative. When the bourgeoisie still function as a revolutionary class, they endorse the action of the peasantry. The Chinese bourgeoisie did not act that way. They were no longer a revolutionary class. The action of the

Nationalist Government, supported by petit-bourgeois leftism, proved that the peasantry had every reason to disbelieve its motive. The "left" Nationalist Government of Wuhan sanctioned the bloody suppression of the peasantry by its mercenary army under the command of feudal-militarist Generals.

The support of the masses was the only advantage of the Wuhan group in the struggle against the otherwise superior forces of the rival faction. The Wuhan group was naturally very reluctant to lose it. But class struggle broke out into an open civil war in its territory. The offensive was taken by the reactionary classes which controlled all the military forces of the Nationalist Government. Apart from the fact that the army of the Nationalist Government was largely controlled by feudal-militarist officers, there existed in the villages large armed forces under the command of landlords and the local reactionary officials. The peasant organisations were attacked by those local armed forces of reaction. In self-defence, the peasants armed themselves as best as they could under the given conditions. Every village became the scene of two antagonistic forces trying to destroy each other. The Kuo Min Tang and the Nationalist Government spent weeks in idle discussions with the object of finding a peaceful solution of the problem, even after the situation had reached such an acute stage. The Communist Party, which was still giving them the fullest support, to the extent of participating in the Government, pleaded that the defence of the revolution demanded endorsement of the action of the peasantry. It was pointed out that during the French Revolution the Jacobins could survive royalist intrigues and overcome Girondist reaction by legalising the attack of the peasantry upon the privileges of the feudal aristocracy. But the relation of classes and alignment of forces happened to be entirely different in China. Owing to historical reasons, the petit-bourgeoisie were not only reactionary in social outlook; to make the situation still worse, they were involved in an unholy alliance with an ugly product of feudal reaction, namely, the so-called left militarism. Consequently even when the trail was blazed by the masses, they failed to travel the road of democratic revolution needed for the salvation of their own class.

The petit-bourgeois left-wingers once again tried to avoid the burning social issues raised by the development of the revolution. They began the agitation for the continuation of the North Expedition with the object of capturing Peking. They argued that the military and

political tasks of the revolution should be accomplished before the social problems could be successfully solved. There raged a great controversy about the nature of the base of the revolution. Should it be social or territorial? Those anxious to sabotage the agrarian revolution contended that Wuhan, being surrounded by enemies, was no longer a safe base for the revolution which, therefore, should be shifted to regions not so vulnerable. They argued that, for this purpose, new territories must be acquired in the North-Western part of the country; new military forces should be won over to the side of the "left" Kuo Min Tang; and all energy should be devoted to the projected drive in the direction of Peking.

The opposing point of view was that not only any further development, but the safety of the revolution, was conditional upon the consolidation of its social base. For that purpose, the peasant revolt should be backed up by all means; the territories in the South should be recovered, because the revolutionary mass movement was more advanced there; and that the enemies of the revolution should be struck at their roots, which were to be found inside the nationalist territories. Those pressing the latter view pointed out that the crisis of the revolution, being internal, could not possibly be overcome through territorial expansion. They also pointed out that the geographical base of the revolution would be equally open to attack everywhere, so long as the social roots of reaction remained intact. They warned against the danger of the Nationalist Government coming under increasing domination of the so-called left militarists, whose power was sure to grow in consequence of the projected territorial expansion.[2] But no argument was of any avail. The petit-bourgeoisie were scared at the rising tide of revolution and were anxious to run away from it. The feudal militarists were also afraid of the revolution and wanted territorial expansion as the means of increasing their power for attacking the revolutionary masses as soon as possible.

The leaders of the Communist Party supported the plan of military operation for acquiring new territories with the object of consolidating the base of the revolution geographically. Nevertheless, they were persuaded to insist that the solution of the social problems need not wait until the programme of territorial expansion was completed. The two tasks should be tackled simultaneously. It was contended that the agrarian revolution in the nationalist territories

would place the Government in a very solid position, from which it could conduct military operations on all sides. The compromise formula was acceptable to all. But the masses were awake. They could no longer be deceived by promises, not meant to be kept. The second North Expedition attracted all attention. The social tasks of the revolution remained unaccomplished. The class struggle sharpened in the villages throughout the nationalist territories. In that atmosphere of sharpened class struggle, the relation between the Kuo Min Tang and the Communist Party reached breaking point. The "leftists" of Wuhan prepared for attacking the revolutionary masses, following the foot-steps of the rightists of Nanking.

The refusal to support the revolutionary masses in an irrecon-ciable struggle with the feudal-bourgeois reaction led the Wuhan group unavoidably towards the break with the working class, and the consequent betrayal of the revolution. Accusing the Communists of instigating the masses to press impossible demands, the petit-bourgeois radicals made a bid for the leadership of the working class. They argued that the programme of the Kuo Min Tang was "to guide and organise" the masses so that they might participate in the revolution under its control. In support of that argument, they cited the resolution of the Second Congress. That resolution actually contained a clause which placed certain restrictions on the revolutionary demands incorporated in it. The Communists refused to read such a meaning in the resolution. Their attitude was interpreted as the desire to break the alliance with the Kuo Min Tang. Thanks to their timidity to act, lacking the courage to break a tactical agreement, even when it had outlived its usefulness, the Communists were pushed to the position of tacitly agreeing to check the development of class struggle. The Communists committed yet another fatal mistake which contributed to their disastrous defeat before long.

But revolutionary events could not be arrested; they happened according to their own logic. Urban workers pressed their economic demands. The peasantry continued the resistance to the efforts of feudal-bourgeois reaction to deprive them of the freedom of organisation they had conquered in course of the revolution. Finding that political freedom could not be consolidated unless the economic foundation of reaction was disrupted, the peasantry began the confiscation of land just as during the French Revolution. The French Revolution triumphed when it legalised similar action of the

peasantry. The Chinese bourgeoisie not only failed to carry through the democratic revolution, but turned against it because, themselves being connected with the pre-capitalist system of land-ownership, they refused to endorse its abolition by the revolutionary action of the peasantry.

It was a crisis of leadership that the Chinese Revolution experienced in the spring of 1927. Even after its debacle at Canton, petit-bourgeois left nationalism received yet another chance of leading the democratic revolution against the opposition of the bourgeoisie. It once again failed to rise up to the occasion, because it would not face the reality of the class struggle that constituted the social background of the struggle for democratic national freedom.

Notes

1. Tang Liang-li, "The Foundations of Modern China".

2. The latter plan was advocated by the author of this book. But it did not secure the support of the Chinese Communist leaders.

CHAPTER XVIII

ON THE ROAD TO PEKING

On Apnl 12, 1927, the Nationalist Government of Wuhan decided to despatch a military expedition to the north along the Peking-Hankow Railway. The object of the new military campaign was to join forces with Feng Yu-hsiang who, during the preceding months, had been slowly advancing eastwards from Shensi along the Lunghai Railway.^ The decision of the Nationalist Government was based upon the argument that Chang Tso-lin's forces, then massed on the Yellow River for a drive southward along the Peking-Hankow and the Tientsm-Pukow Railways, should be immediately attacked. Those advocating the new military expedition were of the opinion that the Wuhan forces were strong enough to drive Chang Tro-lin back to Manchuria, capture Peking and Tientsin, and then menace Shanghai from all sides. It was, indeed, a very plausible plan, provided that the Wuhan Government was really in a position to execute it. But the forces at its command were not nearly strong enough for the gigantic task; and the supporters of the plan had in view something entirely different from what they gave out as their ostensible object.

The father of the plan was Tang Shen-chi. His ambition to be the military dictator of Nationalist China had suffered a set back, his rival, Chiang Kai-shek, having come out of the factional struggle for power much the stronger. Tang Shen-chi's power was confined to two provinces which were the centre of a revolutionary mass movement threatening the very social foundation of militarism. So he insisted upon a new military campaign, hoping that that would give him the opportunity to enlarge his forces. During the campaign in the previous year, his army had increased nearly ten times. His claim to the supreme leadership of the Nationalist Army was based

upon the fact that troops under his command had captured the Han cities, while the main nationalist forces commanded by Chiang Kai-shek made slow progress towards Shanghai. But subsequently, the credit for the capture of Hankow had been eclipsed by the success of Chiang Kai-shek in occupying Shanghai and Nanking. Tang Shen-chi, therefore, desired to retrieve his prestige and position. That he could do as the first to hoist the nationalist flag in Peking.

After the fall of Hankow, Wu Pei-fu had withdrawn his headquarters to Chengchow. For years Wu Pei-fu had been the ruler of the provinces north of the Yangtse valley, and had disputed with Chang Tso-lin the overlordship of China. But the approach of the Nationalist Army to the Yangtse valley forced the formation of the so-called Aukuochun (army for the pacification of the country) under the supreme command of the Manchurian War-Lord. In December 1926, he came to Peking to direct operations. Sun Chuan-fang, Chang Tsung-chang and Yen Hsi-shar were appointed his chief lieutenants. The Ankuochun leaders invited Wu Pei-fu to join the alliance, but the invitation was rejected. Thereupon, the Ankuochun crossed the Yellow River and easily defeated the disorganised forces of Wu Pei-fu, a number of whose Generals as usual proved to be undependable in the time of need.

The main concern of the Northern Alliance, however, was to keep the nationalists away from Shanghai. Most of its forces were concentrated on the Tientsin-Pukow Line, leaving the defense of the Peking-Hankow Line mostly to the care of the Generals of Wu Pei-fu's army who had deserted their chief. But they had also entered into secret negotiation either with Feng Yu-hsiang or Tang Shen-chi, and were ready to declare their adherence to the Nationalist Government. In the beginning of the year, Feng's army had occupied the highly strategic Tungwan Pass on the Shensi-Honan border, and was slowly advancing towards Chengchow along the Lunghai Railway. Thus, any Northern Army moving southward along the Peking-Hankow line would have its right flank open to attack by Feng, who had been appointed one of the High Commanders of the nationalist forces. But there was no serious obstacle for the Ankuochun marching southward along the Tientsin-Pukow line.

In the middle of April 1927, it reached the Yangtse at a point just across Nanking which had already been captured by the nationalist forces under the command of Chiang Kai-shek. So, for the

moment, the constellation of contending forces was favourable to Tang Shen-chi's ambition. Still another consideration went into the making of his plan. It was to prevent a junction of the forces of Feng Yu-hsiang and Chiang Kai-shek. Should that event take place, he would be cut off from Peking, and consequently his ambition would be decisively frustrated. He planned to capture the eastern sector of the Lunghai Railway, joining the two trunk lines, calculating that, cut off from the nationalist forces under Chiang Kai-shek, Feng would agree to march upon Peking together with the Wuhan Army under his command.

The political leaders of the Wuhan Group acquiesced in Tang Shen-chi's plan of a new military campaign, although they had been conducting their opposition against Chiang Kai-shek ostensibly with the purpose of defending the principle of party authority as against military dictatorship. Why did they do that? Wuhan had become a place too uncomfortable for them. It was no longer possible to postpone the fulfilment of the promises that the Kuo Min Tang had made to the masses. Either the promises had to be fulfilled by supporting the revolutionary action of the masses, or it would become evident that those promises had not been honestly made. Both the ways were equally uncomfortable for petit-bourgeois pseudo-radicalism.

Following one, it would be obliged to break with the "left" militarists. The Nationalist Government could not retain the support of those doubtful and treacherous allies, should it sanction the confiscation of land by the peasants and the establishment of revolutionary democratic power in the villages with the declared intention of destroying feudal-patriarchal reaction. On the other way, that is, by coming out openly against tbe revolutionary action of the masses, the Wuhan Group would forfeit the claim to any distinction from the rival clique of Nanking. Therefore, they welcomed the plan of Tang Shen-chi which promised them a way out of the dilemma.

They vociferously agitated for the continuation of the North Expedition, and exhorted the masses to abstain from sharpening the class struggle when the first stage of the revolution was still incomplete. They maintained that unification of the country was the first task of the revolution, and declared that the Nationalist Government would act according to its promises to the masses as soon as Peking was captured. But the true face of petit-bourgeois radicalism was

clearly visible through that thin veil of demagogy. Its accredited leader, Wang Chin-wei, on the authority of Sun Yat-sen, publicly opposed the confiscation of land by the peasants. He argued that Sun Yat-sen had advocated redistribution of land to the peasants by the Government. The application of that principle to practice was conditional upon the liberation of the Nationalist Government from the domination of social elements having a stake in the existing system of landownership. But the endorsement of Tang Shen-chi's plan by the "left" Kuo Min Tang proved that the Nationalist Government had capitulated completely to its feudal-militarists allies It could not do otherwise, unless it abandoned the patriarchal notion of agrarian reform, and assumed the leadership of the bourgeois-democratic revolution by legalising the action of the peasantry against the economic privileges and political powers of feudal reaction.

The principles of Sun Yat-sen, however, were not those of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. They were positively reactionary, visualising re-establishment of the mediaeval system of land distribution by a patriarchal State. As the political principle of Sun Yat-sen was paternal depotism, petit-bourgeois radical nationalists professing that principle were bound to support the military dictatorship of feudal Generals. They betrayed not only the masses, but proved their inability to help the accomplishment of the bourgeois democratic revolution.

The success of the first North Expedition—occupation of the country as far as the Yangtse valley -had placed before the Kuo Min Tang the task of consolidating the revolutionary democratic forces. The accomplishment of that task was the only guarantee against military dictatorship which was raising its ominous head from all sides. New military campaigns obviously would not help the accomplishment of the basic task of the moment. On the contrary, there was every reason to believe that it would strengthen the position of the military factor as against the revolutionary democratic forces.

The success of the projected drive towards Peking was conditional upon the adhesion of Feng Yu-hsiang and Yen Hsi-shan. Consequently, in Peking, the Nationalist Government would find itself in a position much more dominated by the military elements than in Wuhan. In the place of one, there would be no less than three warlords to contend with. For all these considerations, the new military campaign was obviously not the way for the Nationalist Government

to travel, if it desired to accomplish the tasks of the revolution.

Any further development of the revolution demanded, above all, three measures: 1. Disruption of the social basis of feudal-patriarchal reaction in the nationalist territory; 2. Capture of political power by the revolutionary democratic masses; 3. Creation of a genuinely revolutionary army. Conditions in the territory under the control of the Wuhan Government were ripe for the introduction of all these measures. In Hunan, Hupeh, Kiangsi and Kwangtung, the peasant masses were mightily assailing the citadel of feudal-patriarchal reaction. That revolutionary action of the peasantry objectively was a characteristic feature of bourgeois-democratic revolution, the historical task of which is to remove the obstacle to capitalist production and to create legal conditions for the unrestricted development of this latter. It has been shown in previous chapters how an antiquated system of relations of property in land obstructed development of capitalism in China. The action of the peasantry for changing that established system, therefore, was a measure for developing the bourgeois-democratic revolution. The innumerable forms ef feudal-militarist restriction upon the economic life of the country were to be removed before modern modes of production could be introduced.

In thousands of villages, throughout the territories under the control of the Wuhan Government, the peasant masses, under the leadership of the local Kuo Min Tang Committees, were engaged in the struggle for the capture of political power. The Peasant Unions were the rallying ground for the rural democratic masses, exploited and oppressed by an alliance of landlords, usurers, bureaucratic officials and militarists. In the urban areas, the democratic masses were mobilised in the organisation of students, artisans, small traders and poor intellectuals, in addition to the trade-unions which stood at the forefront of the struggle. These democratic mass organisations conducted a ceaseless struggle against foreign Imperialism and native reaction. In the countryside as well as in the towns, there was developing the struggle for the capture of political power by the democratic masses.

Those mass organisations provided the solid basis for the creation of a genuinely revolutionary army. By arming the poor peasantry engaged in the struggle against the Min Tuan,[a] the Nationalist Government could lay the foundation of an army which

could soon be invincible. The French peasantry helped Napoleon for twenty years to wage war against feudal Europe, because the revolution had given them the land. The support of the peasantry made it possible for the Soviet Republic of Russia to defend itself against a world of enemies. Had the Nationalist Government of Wuhan endorsed the revolutionary action of the peasantry, and armed them in their struggle against feudal reaction, its position would have been invincible.

Instead of taking that revolutionary course, the Nationalist Government favoured the plan of continuing military operations until Peking was captured. In view of the fact that military operations provided the pretext for suspending all social struggle in the national -list territories, the plan was clearly counter-revolutionary.

As soon as the decision was made, the Nationalist Government called upon the masses to suspend all activities on the pretext that these would weaken the rear of the army fighting against northern militarism. Instead of fulfilling its previous promises, it asked the masses to make further sacrifices, so that new military victories could be won While industrial workers were prohibited to strike for improving their economic conditions, they were obliged to labour for longer hours to keep the army well supplied. Even the struggle against Imperialism was suspended on the pretext that the Nationalist Government should avoid international complications so long as it was engaged in the war against the northern militarists. In short, the plan of military advance northwards provided the Nationalist Government with the opportunity to prepare for the counter-revolutionary offensive which was to take place before long.

The real motive of the plan became clearly evident when the "Iron Army"[3] was selected as the first to be sent to the front. That was the only military unit on which the Nationalist Government had any control. The "left" militarists, who had joined the nationalist ranks in course of the campaign for the capture of Wuhan, did not want to move their troops away from the provinces in the throes of an agrarian revolution. They were afraid that, taking advantage of their absence, the "Iron Army" might openly go over to the revolutionary peasantry. In any case, the presence of nearly twenty thousand troops, steeled in many battles officered by young intellectuals with revolutionary conviction, connected with the rebellious masses and owing allegiance not to any individual, but to

the Kuo Min Tang and the Nationalist Government, was an obstacle to the ambition of Tang Shen-chi. With them as the nucleus, a dependable army could be created easily by distributing weapons to the workers and peasants, should the Kuo Min Tang or any other political party want to liberate the revolution from the curse of "left" militarism. Therefore, Tang Shen-chi planned to get the "Iron Army" out of the way.

In the beginning of June, 1927, the Wuhan troops reached Chengchow at the crossing of the Peking-Hankow and Lunghai Railways. Meanwhile, Chiang Kai-shek had also succeeded in repulsing the army of Sun Chuan-fang which had, in the middle of April, occupied Pukow, facing Nanking just across the Yangtse. His forces advanced rapidly along the Tientsin-Pukow line. There began a race between the two rivals for the capture of Peking. But it was Feng Vu-hsiang who held the trump-card; and there was still the "model *Tuchun"* (Yen Hsi-shan, the Governor of Shansi), to be taken into account. Only at the end of the previous year, Yen Hsi-shan had joined the Northern Alliance as one of the chief lieutenants of the Manchurian War-Lord. Nevertheless, since then he had declared together with Fang Yu-hsiang, his adhesion to the nationalist cause. But none of them had openly taken side in the conflict between Wuhan and Nanking. It was, however, known that Feng had been in constant communication with Chiang Kai-shek, and approved of his attack upon the revolutionary workers' and peasants' movement. Yet, he was out in the market to sell his support to the highest bidder. He did not want any of the rival nationalist groups to reach Peking. He wanted that proud place as the prize for his adhesion to the nationalist cause. Of course, he must settle accounts with Yen, who also cast greedy glances upon the national metropolis. But to begin with, Feng must have one or the other of the nationalist groups to place him at the command of the army that was to capture Peking.

All the Wuhan leaders went to Chengchow to meet Feng on the latter's demand—on an "invitation". The plan for further military operation was to be elaborated in that conference. Feng had a surprise for the Wuhan leaders. He did not appear at the conference as an officer reporting to his Government. Only two months ago, the Central Executive Committee of the Kuo Min Tang had appointed him the Commander of a section of the Nationalist

Army. But he came to the conference obviously to dictate his terms. Leaving his train of luxurious saloon cars, in which his staff was lodged, some miles outside the "Christian General" rode into Chengchow on an open truck together with the ill-clad ordinary soldiers. He appeared in the gathering of the pompous politicians and gorgeous Generals in an ordinary soldier's uniform, munching a chunk of dry bread.

There was no prolonged negotiation. He laid down the following terms: The newly acquired province of Honan should be under his control; the Wuhan Government must pay him a large subsidy in return for formal inclusion of his troops in the Nationalist Army; the command of the expedition to Peking should be given to him; and the Wuhan group must forthwith enter into negotiations with the Nanking clique for unification.

The road to Peking was blocked for Tang Shen-chi. Should he dare pursue his ambition, his troops would be caught between those of Feng from the West and of Chiang from the East. Not willing to draw the chestnuts out of the fire for Feng, he decided to return to his base. The decision was forced upon him by yet another event. As previously in the campaign for the capture of woochang, so in the battles for the conquest of Honan, the "Iron Army" did most of the real fighting. But its victories did not belong to it. On the contrary, it was outnumbered in the midst of a mercenary horde which increased in size and influence in course of the campaign. It was evident that, should the expedition be continued, the "Iron Army" would be again placed in the forefront. No longer willing to fight other people's battles, the Commander of the "Iron Army" pre-emptorily decided to return to Wuhan which, in the meantime, was seriously menaced from all sides. That emergency provided the "Iron-Army" with a plausible pretext to withdraw from a thankless task.

The feudal-militarist Generals of Tang Shen-chi, left behind to defend the nationalist base, had been busily preparing a *coup d'etat.* They had established contact with the Nanking clique which was moving troops up the Yangtse. An army stationed to the West of Wuhan, commanded by General Yan Sen, was also in communication with Nanking, and began to march upon the nationalist capital. At that juncture, Tang Shen-chi could not wait a minute when the "Iron Army" began to move back towards Wuhan. The whole counterrevolutionary plan, engineered by himself, was in the danger of being

frustrated. He rushed his troops back towards the base.

From Chengchow, Feng went to meet Chiang at Hsuchow—the junction of the Lunghai and Pukow-Tientsin Railways. Two of the Wuhan leaders[4] notoriously hostile to Chiang Kai-shek, accompanied him. Feng's intervention disrupted the Wuhan group. There was no longer any doubt about his intention. He had decided to join hands with Chiang, even if the Wuhan group conceded to all his demands. Wuhan's position became very precarious. In the military sense, it could not possibly hold its own against such a formidable combination. Politically, it had hardly any ground to stand upon. It had forfeited the credit of any essential difference from the rival group by opposing the peasantry attacking the social roots of feudal-militarist reaction and by the anxiety to restrain the urban democratic masses from developing the anti-imperialist struggle. Nothing but personal ambitions and jealousies stood on the way to the fusion of the two rival groups into one united feudal-bourgeois bloc against the revolution.

The only bone of contention was that the Wuhan group still maintained that formal relation with the Communists. While maintaining that formal relation, only to distinguish itself from the rival faction, the Wuhan Government also freely condoned the action of its Generals against the workers' and peasants movement. Even that formal distinction was on the point of breaking. The demand for breaking the relation with the Communists was pressed not only by the "left militarist" allies; most of the civilian members of the Government also supported the demand.

The petit-bourgeois left wing of the Kuo Min Tang was put to the crucial test. Break with the Communists would most certainly be the prelude to a bloody suppression of the revolutionary mass movement, and consequently there would no longer be any resson for the Wuhan Group to have a separate existence. In that event, the leadership of the Kuo Min Tang and the control of the Nationalist Government would be captured completely by the feudal-bourgeois right wing. The petit-bourgeoisie would be eliminated from the political field, unless they were prepared to play a minor role in the counterrevolutionary drama. In view of that depressing perspective, Wang Chin-wei endeavoured to avoid the break with the Communists; but he asked the latter to make all the concessions necessary for continuing a coalition of classes which had been rendered untenable

by the development of the revolution.

In that critical moment, the petit-bourgeoisie could avert their political elimination only by a closer alliance with the masses; the object of the alliance should be to intensify revolutionary activities, and that would require a complete break from the big bourgeoisie and the feudal militarists. What Wang Chin-wei wanted, however, was to maintain the old broad coalition of classes by arresting the development of the revolution. His proposal was that the Communist Party should cease to be the revolutionary vanguard of the working class, the spearhead of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, so that the petit-bourgeois left wing of the Kuo Min Tang could continue the co-operation with it. The situation demanded that the petit-bourgeoisie should liberate themselves from the reactionary principles of Sun Yat-sen, if they wanted to lead the revolution in co-operation with the working class. The principles of Sun Yat-sen were the ideology of those who wanted to defend patriarchal tradition and its economic basis of precapitalist production. Holding on to those principles, the petit-bourgeois left wing of the Kuo Min Tang went over to the camp of counter-revolution.

In the Hsuchow Conference, held at the end of June, Feng Yu-hsiang persuaded Chiang Kai-shek to postpone the drive towards Peking pending the composition of the differences inside the nationalist camp. He wanted to consolidate his power in the province of Honan, and occupy such strategic positions as would place his army in the forefront of the nationalist forces advancing on Peking. In other words, he wanted the situation to develop in such a way as would place him in command of Peking when it would be finally captured. The Nanking leaders, on their part, could see as well as Feng that further extension of nationalist territories should be conditional upon the suppression of the revolutionary movement in the southern provinces. All the northern militarists were uniting to resist the nationalist advance upon the metropolis. They were amassing formidable forces along the Yellow River. Foreign Powers were also preparing for active intervention to prevent the nationalists from capturing Peking.[5] In that situation, unity in the nationalist camp was the essential condition for further military operations. All the available forces must be employed for the attainment of the goal. On the other hand, the despatch of all the nationalist forces towards the north would be a move fraught with grave dangers, as long as

the revolutionary movement in the south was not crushed. With the great bulk of the armed forces far away on the northern front, the nationalist base in the southern provinces would be exposed to attack by the revolutionary masses. The suppression of the Communist Party, and the disruption of the Kuo Min Tang as the rallying ground of all the revolutionary democratic forces, were the only guarantee against that danger.

From Hsuchow. Feng sent an open telegram to the Wuhan Government urging the necessity of unifying all the nationalist forces in the struggle against northern militarism, while pointing out that Wuhan's insistence upon maintaining relation with the Communists was the only obstacle to that unity. In the telegram, he demanded that the Wuhan Government should immediately dismiss its Russian advisors and suppress the Communist Party. The demand was backed up by the thinly veiled threat that Feng would attack Wuhan from the north in case his advice was not accepted. The telegram strengthened the hands of those leaders of the Wuhan group who had been pressing for the break with the Communists and suppression of the revolutionary mass movement.

The petit-bourgeois left wing stood naked in its political bankruptcy. The Communists made a last effort to maintain the revolutionary democratic coalition in a narrowed-down class basis. Addressing the petit-bourgeois left wing of the Kuo Min Tang, they suggested that in that critical moment there should be a clear standard to judge whether a class or a party or an individual was the friend or enemy of the National Revolution. They pointed out that there was much ambiguity on the question. Reactionary feudal militarists, massacring workers and peasants and suppressing the revolutionary democratic mass movement, called themselves not only nationalists but revolutionaries. They justified their murderous deeds as committed in the defence of the National Revolution. The Nationalist Government of Wuhan as well as its rival at Nanking sought compromise with Imperialism. It delivered itself completely to the mercies of the counter-revolutionary "left" militarists and sanctioned the massacre of the toiling masses. Still it called itself revolutionary. The left wing of the Kuo Min Tang declared itself opposed to all the demands of the workers and peasants. It tended to a reunion with the feudal-bourgeois right wing which had openly betrayed the Nationalist Revolution. The Wuhan Government was

conspiring with the feudal militarists against the workers' and peasants' movement, while still claiming to be the leader of the Nationalist Revolution.

Pointing out all these facts, the Communists insisted that a definite platform of National Revolution should be the standard by which the character of a class, party or individual should be judged. Those unwilling to stand on that platform should be declared enemies of the revolution. The platform of the National Revolution proposed by the Communists had for its object the mobilisation of all democratic forces still under the banner of the Kuo Min Tang, provided that the petit-bourgeois leaders were prepared to conduct a revolutionary struggled against foreign Imperialism as well as the feudal-bourgeois bloc of native reaction. The Communists pointed out that the enemy of the revolution was not Chiang Kai-shek personally. The enemy was the feudal-bourgeois-militarist combination, headed by him and supported by all the reactionary forces throughout the nationalist territories; and behind that combination stood foreign Imperialism. To destroy the counter-revolutionary centre of Nanking, was the immediate task of the revolution. But in order to accomplish that task, the Wuhan Government must win over the support of the masses in the territory under the control of Nanking. That could be done by putting into practice in the provinces under the jurisdiction of the Wuhan Government the resolutions of the Kuo Min Tang concerning the interests of the workers and peasants.

With these considerations, the Communists proposed the following as the main planks in the Platform of the National Revolution: 1. Confiscation of land as stipulated in the resolutions of the Kuo Min Tang and of the Fifth Congress of the Communist Party[6]- 2 Reduction of rents and taxes; 3. Protection of the peasantry against the armed forces of rural reaction; 4. Checking the counter-revolutionary plans of the officers of the Nationalist Army; 5. Submission of the army and Provincial Administrations unconditionally to the Nationalist Government; 6. Responsibility of the Provincial Governments to Assemblies elected by the democratic masses; 7. Establishment of democratic self-government in the villages; 8. Creation of Peasants' Militias for the destruction of the power of the landlords and their agents; 9. Complete freedom for the workers' and peasants' movement; 10. Immediate compliance with the

demands of the workers for eight hours' day, minimum wages and social legislation; 11. Organisation of Workers' Guards to fight counter-revolution; 12 Maintenance of the alliance with the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics; 13. Ruthless struggle against Imperialism, not precluding tactical manoeuvres for splitting the united imperialist front; and 14. Close relation with the exploited classes and oppressed peoples of the world.[7]

This was an irreducible minimum standard. Of course, the feudal militarists and the agents of the big bourgeoisie inside the Wuhan Group could not be expected to measure up to this standard. But it was meant to be a test for petit-bourgeois radicalism. Would it have the courage to fight for a revolutionary democratic programme, based upon the resolutions of the Kuo Min Tang itself? Were those resolutions ever meant to be put into practice? If that was so, the standard should be acceptable to the left nationalist leaders. The readiness to stand on the Platform of National Democratic Revolution would compel them to part company with the feudal militarists and their bourgeois allies conspiring against the revolution. The result would be a revolutionary democratic alliance of the urban petit-bourgeoisie, the peasantry and the proletariat, to conduct the struggle against foreign Imperialism and native reaction.

But the left-wing leaders of the Kuo Min Tang contended that the enforcement of some measures even of agrarian reform would drive the army against the Nationalist Government. In the critical days of the spring of 1927, practically all the Communist leaders including Borodin also shared the fear of the petit-bourgeois nationalist leaders.[8] The dangers inherent in the situation created by tactics of increasing the military forces of the Nationalist Government by the inclusion of questionable elements were pointed out as the justification for delaying any agrarian reform. But a way must be found out of the impasse, if the revolution was not to be betrayed to retain the deceptive loyalty of the reactionary feudal militarists. There was no possibility of feudal military officers ever changing their attitude towards the programme of agrarian reform. There were but two alternatives: Either to liberate the Nationalist Government from the domination of the counter-revolutionary militarists, or to betray the interests of the masses. The latter had begun to take care of their interests themselves. The solicitude for the loyalty of the military officers, therefore, would necessarily force the

Nationalist Government to suppress the mass movement violently. Thus, the Nationalist Government could retain the deceptive adhesion of the "left" militarists only by betraying the revolution. For, suppression of the mass movement would be the death-blow to the revolution.

The situation, however, was not so hopeless. The revolution was in a severe crisis, in consequence of grave mistakes committed in the past. The crisis could be overcome by the rectification of those mistakes. It was not true that the entire army was hostile to the agrarian revolution. The soldiers were all recruited from the pauperised peasantry; they would be enthusiastic supporters of the revolution if the significance of it was explained to them. Any possible hostility on their part to the demands of the peasantry was the result of their ignorance, exploited by the higher officers who were all landlords. But as against these, the lower officers were mostly recruited from the oppressed and exploited middle-class, many of them possessing progressive ideas and revolutionary ideals. They could be expected to sympathise with the revolutionary movement, and even support it actively when the proper time came. The agrarian reform visualised in the resolutions of the Kuo Min Tang and demanded by the peasantry immediately, did not touch the interests of small owners. On the contrary, the destruction of the monopoly, which big landlords, the military bureaucracy and reactionary officials exercised over rural economy, would relieve the position of the small owners and producers. Abolition of the privileges of the big landlords, overthrow of the autocratic officials, and disappearance of the exorbitant exactions by the militarists would free the forces of production from throttling restrictions. Politically, the result of such a revolution would be transfer of power to the democratic masses, including the lower middle-class. Therefore, not only the soldiers, but a majority of the under-officers of the Nationalist Army could be won over for the programme of a radical agrarian reform. By forcing a process of class differentiation inside the Nationalist Army, the position of the counter-revolutionary militarists could be weakened. Revolutionary propaganda on the basis of the Platform of National Revolution would win the democratic elements in the army for the Nationalist Government.

Moreover, the Nationalist Government could easily create an army of its own if it really wanted to lead the revolution. The

petit-bourgeois left-wing leaders admitted that the militarists were the enemies of the revolution, when they contended that agrarian reform could not be enforced owing to the hostility of the military officers. Yet they would not fight the enemies of the revolution. Their reluctance in this respect laid their loyalty to the revolution open to serious doubt. They had agreed with the militarists' plan of self-aggrandisement, although the plan was evidently counter-revolutionary. Now that the plan failed, owing to the intervention of more powerful military factors, the left-wing leaders were placed in a position where their real face could no longer be hidden. The Communists offered them help in the struggle to save the revolution. But the proposal of the Communists to raise a new army from the revolutionary workers and peasants, and to overthrow the agents of the right wing from the leadership 'of the Wuhan Group, were not only rejected by the left leaders but interpreted as a plan to overthrow the Nationalist Government, to destroy the Kuo Min Tang and to set up a Communist dictatorship.[9]

At last the Rubicon was crossed. The left-wing leaders openly joined the crusade against the Communists, fully shared the feudal-militarist hatred against the revolutionary mass movement, and agreed to the fusion of the two rival nationalist groups under the reactionary flag of Sun Yat-senism.

In the middle of April 1927, the Wuhan Government had dismissed Chiang Kai-shek from the office of the Commander-in-Chief of the Nationalist Army; he had been expelled also from the party, accused of twelve offences against the revolution. The charges against him were summarised as follows: "Chiang Kai-shek is found guilty of massacre of the people, and oppression of the party, and he deliberately engages himself in reactionary acts and his crimes and outrages are obvious."

In view of that bombastic decision, the prodigals of the Wuhan Group could not favour reunion without completely discrediting themselves before the members of the party, unless some concession was made from the side of Chiang Kai-shek. He had to step aside for a time, so that the mutually desired counter-revolutionary reunion could take place without any hitch. Unless the breach in the nationalist camp was fundamentally repaired, the return of the Wuhan leaders would be of little use for the big bourgeoisie who, supported by international Imperialism, desired a concentration of all the

forces of counter-revolution.

The Wuhan-Nanking quarrel had taken place on the background of a process of class differentiation in the nationalist ranks. The split did not take place along that line of differentiation, owing to the intervention of the military factor. Nevertheless, the masses of the urban petit-bourgeoisie sympathised with the Wuhan Group; and it was that class which always constituted the social basis of the Kuo Min Tang. Therefore, the creation of a counter-revolutionary united front under the false colour of Nationalism was not possible so long as the Wuhan leaders stood out. The main obstacle was their own action under the pressure of the bourgeoise and the feudal militarists. Now, some concession must be from the other side. The retirement of Chiang Kai-shek was the concession. That concession not only made it possible for the Wuhan leaders to enter into negotiations for unity with the Nanking clique; Tang Shen-chi could also be placated by that move.

Threatened by the more powerful combination of Feng Yu-hsiang and Chiang Kai-shek, the Wuhan military dictator had abandoned his ambitious plan to capture Peking. He had withdrawn all his forces to the base with two objectives: (1) To crush the revolutionary movement in the two provinces of Hupeh and Hunan under his control; and (2) To take offensive measures as guarantee against any possible attack from Nanking. Wuhan was not seriously menaced from the north. Feng could not attack Wuhan so long as the northern forces remained still unbeaten, and were concentrated along the Yellow River. On the pretext of attacking Nanking, Tang Shen-chi sent the "Iron Army" away from Wuhan. Other troops, not under his personal control, were also ordered down the Yangtse. That move, made by Tang Shen-chi to instal himself as the undisputed lord of the provinces under Wuhan, was, however, interpreted at Nanking as an attack upon itself. The result was the withdrawal of the bulk of Chiang Kai-shek's army from the northern front, opening the road for Chang Tsung-chang to sweep southwards. He drove back the depleted Nanking forces, and re-occupied Pukow in the middle of August. At the same time, Sun Chuan-fang's forces also pressed upon Shanghai from Kiangsu. Before that danger of northern invasion, the necessity of composing the differences in the nationalist camp became urgent. After the Wuhan Group had severed the relation with the Communists, Chiang Kai-shek was the only obstacle

on the way to the much needed unity. He way, therefore, forced to step aside by his own supporters.

When, in June 1927, the northern forces had been driven to the Yellow River by the nationalists advancing along the two railways from the Yangtse, the "model Tuchun" of Shansi intervened in the situation. He appealed to the Manchurian War-Lord Chang Tso-lin to accept the three principles of Sun Yat-sen, and declare his adhesion to the Kuo Min Tang. There followed a conference of the northern militarists to consider the appeal of Yen Hsi-shan. Meanwhile came the news that the nationalists had been repulsed on the front. So the northern War-Lords stiffened up their backs and refused to accept the advice of Yen Hsi-shan. Their previous agreement to consider the appeal had, however, proved that there was nothing in the principle of Sun Yat-sen essentially antagonistic to their interests, and that their adhesion to the Kuo Min Tang was not altogether out of question. Nevertheless, they would not formally subordinate themselves to a central authority, when there was any chance of retaining the position of independent feudal potentates in their respective spheres of influence. The defeat of the southern forces and the dissensions in the nationalist camp encouraged them to continue the resistence to the efforts of creating a central authority out of the chaos of a prolonged civil war.

Ever since the abortive revolution of 1911, the feudal militarists, aided by foreign Imperialism, had frustrated the attempt of the bourgeoisie to create a centralised modern State. In course of time there came into operation revolutionary forces having for their object the abolition of social conditions which bred the cause* of chronic civil wars. At last the social foundation of militarism was attacked. Its very existence in peril, militarism split horizontally in two sections. The process had been in operation, parallel to the development of the democratic mass movement. One section, the so-called left militarists, sought an alliance with the object of splitting the democratic forces. It has been seen how the Kuo Min Tang was wrecked on the rock of alliance with left militarism. Feng Yu-hsiang and Yen Hsi-shan were the most outstanding figures to grow out of the decomposition of militarism. They represented the tendency of of the reactionary Bonapartism of Nepoleon III—a striving to set up a centralised dictatorship, supported by the financial and commercial bourgeoisie, but primarily based on the conservative peasant pro-

prietor. The object, on the one hand, was to drive a wedge of differentiation in the ranks of the peasantry, to pit the upper strata against the lower; on the other hand, it was to divert the tendency towards centralisation so that it might not totally disrupt the position of feudal militarism.

The leadership of the struggle for the capture of the national metropolis passed to the representatives of left militarism. The struggle continued for nearly a year, the fortunes of war changing sides many times. Meanwhile, dissensions in the nationalist camp were composed. The reactionary feudal-bourgeois bloc succeeded in defeating the forces of revolutionary democracy. The establishment of a united Nationalist Government at Nanking signified defeat of the revolution. But a centralised modern State can be created only upon the victory of the bourgeois revolution, the basic task of which is the destruction of Feudalism.

The Nanking Government did not represent a union of the democratic forces. It was an alliance of the bourgeoisie with feudal reaction, the worst enemy of democratic centralisation. The situation was made still worse by the fact that the Nanking Government sought for, and received, the benediction of foreign Imperialism. For nearly a hundred years foreign Imperialism had been the unfailing ally of reaction in China. It could not possibly support the Nanking Government, had it represented the forces of democracy and progress.

Having ceased to be the revolutionary alliance of the democratic forces, the Kuo Min Tang won the adhesion of feudal militarism at home, and the patronage of the imperialist Powers abroad. When the Nationalist Government proved itself to be a ruthless enemy of revolution, it secured the allegiance of the feudal war-lords, one after another, until the worthy son of Cbang Tso-lin himself brought up the rear of the pageant. A year ago, Imperialist Powers had taken belligerent measures when the Nationalist Army advanced towards Peking. The Kuo Min Tang and the Nationalist Government underwent such a metamorphosis in the mean time that, in the middle of 1928, the road to the national metropolis was open to them.

In June of that year, Chiang Kai-shek had returned to his place, much strengthened by the complete capitulation of the petit-bourgeois left wing, whose discredited leader again went into exile. Things at the base all settled in his favour. Chiang's final march to Peking was

more successful than before. Now he was leading the army of a government which though still nationalist in name, had declared war upon the revolution and made peace with Imperialism. The remnants of northern militarism no longer received the support of foreign Powers to keep the nationalists away from Peking. These were no longer dangerous. On the contrary, under the new conditions, they could be more useful allies of Imperialism than the decrepit and discredited militarists. But even then, Chiang was allowed to enter Peking only after Feng and Yen had become the real masters there. The nationalists captured Peking after they had been captivated by the spirit of that old centre of feudal-patriarchal reaction.

No commentary on the principles of Sun Yat-sen could be more damaging than the fact that they were now accepted even in the feudal realm of Manchuria with the sanction of Japanese Imperialism which reigned supreme there. The complete collapse of the Kuo Min Tang, its transformation into an instrument of counter-revolution, was celebrated by the hoisting of its flag on Mukden. On the road to Peking, the nationalist bourgeoisie found allies to help them stop the march of the revolution. It was also on the same fateful road that petit-bourgeois radicalism parted company with the revolutionary masses, and became a willing instrument of reaction and active agent of counter-revolution.

Notes

1. The Lunghai Railway runs east to west cutting across the central province of Honan. It joins the two trunk lines from Peking to the Yangtse valley, and stretches westward to the Tungwan Pass on the border of Shensi.

2. The Min Tuan were the armed forces of rural reaction. In addition to regular troops of the Government, the landlords together with other reactionary classes in the country-side maintained large armed forces ostensibly as protection against banditry, but really for maintaining their autocratic position. These forces were recruited either from the village rowdies or well-to-do upper strata of the peasantry. They were, therefore, entirely dependable instruments for defending the existing order of things in the village. It was estimated by the Peasant Department of the Kuo Min Tang as well as by the Communist Party that the Min Tuan was so strong numerically that they could be counted in tens of thousands. In the province of Kwangtung alone, they were over fifty thousand. The Nationalist Government did not take any steps for destroying that formidable weapon of counter-revolution. As soon as the Peasant Unions became active, attacking the privileges of the landlords and their allies, they naturally came into conflict with the Min Tuan.

3. The Fourth and the Eleventh Armies of the Nationalist forces acquired the proud title for their valiant deeds throughout the campaign from Canton to the Yangtse valley. They ware recruited at Canton and constituted the original nucleus of the nationalist forces. The Commander-in-Chief was Chang Fa-kwei, a left-wing member of the Kuo Min Tang. Most of the officers were cadets of the Whampoa Academy. In contrast to the bulk of the nationalist forces, those two armies were not mercenary, owing allegiance to this or that individual militarist. They were subordinated directly to the Nationalist Government and owed allegiance to the Kuo Ming Tang.

4. Hsu-Chen and Kuo-Min-wu accompanied Feng. The former had been a Christian Bishop, the first Chinese to attain that dignity. He had been the chaplain of the "Christian General's" army. He joined the Wuhan Nationalist Government as the Minister of Justice and became the leader of the anti-Chiang faction. He was the chairman of the Wuhan Committee of the Kuo Min Tang until the return of Wang Chin-wei. Kuo Min-wu was one of the ideologists of the Kuo Min Tang. He had always been a leading figure of the left radical faction. At Wuhan, he was the head of the Propaganda Department of the party. The behaviour of both those "leftists" proved that they did not approve of the developments at Wuhan, although they had not dared to speak out their mind. As soon as the opportunity came, they decamped, exposing how hypocritical had been the radicalism of the Wuhan Group.

5. "The advance of the nationalist forces up to the Tsinpu Railway led to apprehension for the safety of Peking and Tientsin, The foreign garrisons in these cities were, therefore, reinforced. The American Government sent up 3,500 marines. The British sent a second battalion to Tientsin, and the French and the Japanese also brought in reinforcements. The Japanese Government also despatched troops to Tsingtao for the protection of its nationals in Shantung." *(The China Year Book,* 1928).

6. The resolution of the Fifth Congress of the Communist Party was against wholesale confiscation. Only large estates were to be confiscated. There was a controversy over the definition of a "large estate". The Ku^ Min Tang set the limit at 500 mus, while the Communists insisted that it should be lowered down to 100,

7. The author as the representative of the Communist International suggested that the Communist Party should address an Open Letter to the left-wing leaders of the Kuo Min Tang, setting forth the Platform of National Revolution. Unfortunately, the suggestion did not find favour with the leaders of the Communist Party and others guiding its policy. The platform with a preamble setting forth the facts recorded in the preceding paragraph was, however, drafted by the author and was published without the official sanction of the Executive of the Communist Party.

8. "Owing to the opposition of the military men, the resolution (about the confiscation of land) could not be promulgated. The majority of the officers come from middle and small landowning families, and are therefore

against agrarian revolution. Ninety per cent of the National Army are Hunanese. They are all opposed to excesses in the peasants' movement. In such a situation, not only the Kuo Min Tang, but also the Communist Party is obliged to adopt a policy of concessions. It is necessary to correct excess and to moderate the activities about the confiscation of land." (From a telegram to the Executive Committee of the Communist International, sent on June 15, 1927 by Chen Tu-hsin on behalf of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China.)

9. The proposal was not pressed by the leaders of the Communist Party wholeheartedly. It was made by the author on his personal initiative, and was subsequently endorsed from the Headquarters of the Communist International.

CHAPTER XIX

THE COUNTER-REVOLUTION

Secret revolutionary organisations have always been a characteristic feature of the Chinese village. For hundreds of years, there existed in China illegal peasant organisations with the object of resisting the oppression and exactions by the landlords, State officials, usurers and militarists. After the Reorganisation Conference of the Kuo Min Tang, the peasantry in the province of Kwang-tung, which was then under the power of the National Government, was allowed to organise themselves for improving their conditions of life and taking part in the National Revolution. The peasants did not hesitate to make use of the newly gained freedom. Peasant unions grew up "like bamboo shoots in the spring". Before long it was evident that they represented a powerful threat to reaction.

Foreign Imperialism, native landlords, militarists, corrupt officials, usurers, traders and the entire army of smaller parasites prospered mostly on the labour of the peasant masses. Agriculture being the main branch of national economy, the peasantry was the primary object of exploitation. Therefore, the striving of the peasant masses to improve their conditions of life provoked the hostility of all those who derived benefit from their exploitation. Owing to its extraordinary backwardness, Chinese agriculture produces very little surplus. The existence of the numerous kinds of parasites, big and small, foreign and native, could be maintained by robbing the peasantry not only of the entire surplus produce but also of a considerable part of what little they required for their own subsistence. Hence the periodical famines which consume millions of human lives. Hence also is the stubborn resistance of the exploiting classes even to the slightest improvement of the conditions of the peasantry, not to speak of the revolutionary demand that the entire fruit of their

labour should belong to the peasants. Even the reform, so urgently necessary for the development of national economy as a whole, only to the extent that the peasants be no longer deprived of what they need for their physical existence and reproduction, will blow up the present structure of the Chinese society.

The perspective of a change in the existing conditions of precapitalist exploitation was welcomed by the peasantry as enthusiastically as it was feared by those who are profiting by these conditions. As soon as the Kuo Min Tang opened that perspective before them, the peasants enthusiastically flocked around it and soon became the driving power of the National Revolution. The support of the peasant masses enabled the Nationalist Government to beat down the counterrevolutionary uprisings, step by step, and to extend its power throughout the entire province of Kwangtung.

The enthusiasm of the peasantry over the agrarian programme of the Kuo Min Tang showed that they were willing to support the bourgeoisie in the struggle for removing all the hindrances to capitalist production. But this enthusiasm of the peasantry terrified the bourgeoisie, instead of encouraging them. The cause of this peculiar situation is to be found in the economic system of the country. In addition to their primary capitalist function, the bourgeoisie are connected with the pre-capitalist modes of production as feudal landlords and also as traders. Under the given conditions, an alliance of the bourgeoisie with the peasantry is impossible. The bourgeois revolution is an unavoidable stage of social progress. It must be accomplished, whether the bourgeoisie will or not. In order to free themselves from the bonds of pre-capitalist exploitation, the peasant masses fight the battles of bourgeois revolution. The history of China between 1924 to the middle of 1927 was the history of a bourgeois revolution which developed against the will of the bourgeoisie.

Attacked by the stormy uprising of the peasantry, the reactionary elements in Kwangtung were defeated, but not destroyed. The Nationalist Government did not allow the peasantry to go farther in the struggle against rural reaction. The struggle inside the Kuo Min Tang, resulting in the capture of the leadership by the democratic left wing, indicated the danger that the bourgeois revolution might develop in the face of the resistance of the bourgeoisie. That danger drove the feudal reaction to attack the democratic Nationalist

Government. The attack began with the assassination of Liao Chun-hai in the autumn of 1925. Then followed a general offensive against the peasant movement. The peasant unions became the object of fierce oppression. "Corrupt officials, greedy traders, illegally maintained armed forces, bandits, militia, riff-raffs—all these, supported by Imperialism, began the suppression of the peasant movement, in different ways, with different means : Peasants were murdered, their homes plundered, their women outraged. They were wild, only because the peasants took part in the National Revolution in order to win freedom "* But the revolutionary energy of the peasant masses was too powerful to be broken easily. The peasants defended their organisations and strengthened them in the face of wild reaction. Although the Nationalist Government failed to take any measure to check the activities of the counter-revolutionaries, these did not succeed to beat down the peasant movement. Thereupon, the re-actionaries adopted different tactics. Feudal landlords, corrupt officials and traders, who had previously resisted the Nationalist Government with arms, now entered the Kuo Min Tang. In the villages, they set up peasant unions which were composed of conservative rich peasants, usurers and the rural riff-raff.[2]

The mass of peasantry was suspicious of the new unions, and stayed away from them. The new, yellow peasant unions thereupon began a campaign of lies and calumny against the old revolutionary organisations. These were branded as the nests of bandits and Bolsheviks, who wanted "to confiscate all property and practise free love". The landlords and reactionary officials, who had just recently entered the Kuo Min Tang, echoed this propaganda of lies inside the party. They asserted that the peasantry was against the unions of the "bandits and Bolsheviks" and that, therefore, it was the duty of the Nationalist Government to suppress them. Under the leadership of the Kuo Min Tang, the revolutionary peasants still remained in the defensive. They strengthened their organisation and educated their members, even when the situation called for a decisive offensive as the surest defense.

But organisations of the masses, who for hundreds of years bad lived under intolerable conditions, could not be expected to practise the virtue of patience for ever. The grievances of the peasantry were so numerous and burning that their redress could not be postponed indefinitely. In some districts, the peasant unions demanded reduction

of rent and proposed that the money thus saved should be spent by the peasantry for the purpose of education. Even such moderate demands met the resistance of the parasitic classes. Unions making such demands were bloodily suppressed by private militias. And the Nationalist Government did nothing to prevent its own armed forces from being utilised by the counter-revolutionaries. Landlords, rich peasants, usurers and rural officials tried to get into the peasant unions with the object of decomposing the revolutionary peasant movement. Naturally, there was objection to the admission into the unions of those against whose oppression and exploitation they had been created. That objection became a new ground for fierce attack upon the peasant unions. One of those attacks ended in such a massacre of peasants "that the dead bodies put together looked like a small hill".[3] As the conflict sharpened, the Kuo Min Tang did not support the revolutionary peasants against the enemies of democratic freedom; on the contrary, it hindered all action on their part. "Meanwhile, the feudal resistance against the revolutionary movement grew continually."[4]

The influence of the landlords and old-school officials changed the relation of forces inside the Kuo Min Tang. The continuous attack upon the rural revolutionary movement led to the *coup d'e'tat* of March 20, 1926. Defeated in the urban areas by the democratic mass movement, the forces of reaction carried on their activities in the villages. So a determined offensive against the rural reaction became the only means to secure the future of the revolution. Ihe peasantry was ready for the offensive. In its report to the Second Delegates' Conference of the Kuo Min Tang in the beginning of 1926, the Kwangtung Federation of Peasant Unions declared: "Although military power has destroyed counter-revolution in the cities, the feudal reaction continues its activities in the countryside; the very existence of the peasant movement is threatened. It cannot be defended without subverting the social relations in the village." The report emphasised: "The peasants must be freed from the feudal power not only for their interest, but also for the defense of the Kuo Min Tang and of the Nationalist Government against counter-revolution."

But the nationalist bourgeoisie conspired with the enemies of the peasant movement. The *coup d'etat* of March 20 indicated which way the wind was blowing. The bourgeoisie decisively refused to

make an alliance with the peasantry in the struggle for democratic freedom. The weakness of the petit-bourgeois left wing was exposed by the fact that it also failed to support the peasantry in the revolutionary struggle against feudal reaction. Therefore, it was so easily driven out of its position of power, which it had acquired with the help of the revolutionary masses. Encouraged by the *coup d'etat* of March 20, rural reaction increased its activity. The resolution of the Central Committee of the Kuo Min Tang, adopted soon after the *coup d'etat,* was rightly interpreted by the landowning class as a declaration of the Nationalist Government in favour of the dissolution of the peasant unions and abandonment of the policy of relying upon the support of the democratic masses. Neither the Kuo Min Tang nor the Nationalist Government repudiated such an interpretation of the resolution. The offensive against the peasant movement developed everywhere. Violent destruction of the peasant unions by rowdies, and assassination of their revolutionary leaders came to be current events in Kwangtung in 1926. On the plea that all energy should be applied to the preparation of the North Expedition, the Kuo Min Tang and the Nationalist Government overlooked the fateful fact that counter-revolution was raising its head in their own house.

Just as the Nationalist Government could maintain itself in Kwangtung only with the help of the masses, similarly, thanks to the operation of the same revolutionary factor, could the Nationalist Army sweep everything before it and in a few months penetrate into the heart of the country. But the triumph of the Nationalist Army coincided with the victory of the counter-revolution in the rear. While the peasant masses in Hunan, Kwangsi and Hupeh were enthusiastically welcoming the Nationalist Army as their liberator, in Kwangtung the peasant movement was bloodily suppressed. Upon the departure of the North Expedition, the Chief of the General Staff of the Nationalist Army, Li Chai-sun, became the ruler of Kwangtung. He was a typical representative of the feudal military reaction, who had entered the nationalist ranks with the object of destroying the revolution. Soon after the departure of the North Expedition, the Hongkong Boycott was raised. The Nationalist Government and the headquarters of the Kuo Min Tang were still in Canton. The boycott had not only dealt a staggering blow to the power and prestige of British Imperialism; it had also touched the money-bag of the Chinese traders. Under their pressure, the boycott was ended. When little

Li Chai-sun became the ruler of Canton, he forbade all revolutionary activities. He sharply reined in the democratic freedom introduced by the Nationalist Government, and heaped his wrath on the peasant movement. When the National Revolution reached the climax in the spring of 1928, the peasant movement in Kwangtung was ruthlessly suppressed, the peasant unions were deprived even of the right of legal existence, just like under the Manchus, and the militarist regime established after their downfall.

The National Revolution in colonial countries has two tasks: to overthrow imperialist domination and to destroy the forces of native reaction Throughout the process of the development of the National Revolution, the Kuo Min Tang tried to avoid the second task. Since it did not want to attack the native forces which served as the instrument of imperialist exploitation, it necessarily weakened itself in the struggle against Imperialism. In the beginning, the bourgeoisie welcomed the awakening of the masses; but soon it became clear that Imperialism could not be overthrown, nor Militarism destroyed, without abolishing the social conditions in which the bourgeoisie themselves were also interested. Therefore, the nationalist bourgeoisie were bound to betray the struggle against Imperialism. Hostile to the only force, which, as shown in experience, could attack the citadel of imperialist power successfully, the bourgeoisie were not in a position to conduct the revolutionary struggle against Imperialism. On the other hand Imperialism was not altogether unwilling to come to some understanding with the nationalist bourgeoisie, provided that the latter broke their alliance with the revolutionary masses. As soon as one faction of the nationalist bourgeoisie, led by Chiang Kai-shek, broke away from the revolutionary mass movement, Imperialism altered its attitude towards them very remarkably. When the Nationalist Army was marching towards Shanghai, powerful imperialist forces were concentrated there for keeping the nationalists away. But two months later, the Nationalist Army marched into Shanghai without any resistance. Presumably, that could only happen with the approval of the imperialist Powers. And that approval could be had only in return for the Nationalist Army undertaking to respect all the imperialist privileges. That was capitulation. The main condition of that capitulation was to break the backbone of the National Revolution.

The Nationalist Army stood by, while the Shanghai proletariat faced the fire of imperialist guns and braved the hangmen of the

militarists. It remained passive, in order to show that it did not recognise the revolutionary working class as its vanguard. Upon entering Shanghai eventually, with the permission of Imperialism, the first act of the Nationalist Army was to shoot down the revolutionary workers and suppress the democratic movement.

The nationalists adhered to the conditions of their capitulation so loyally as to win open recognition from Imperialism. The *North China Daily News,* notorious for its hatred of the nationalist movement, wrote in April 1927: "We should not underestimate in the least what General Chiang Kai-shek has done. Under the conditions prevailing here, a fortnight ago, it was not possible to act otherwise than drastically and to shoot down the Communists ruthlessly. In view of the situation, in which General Chiang Kai-shek then found himself, it was necessary to possess a good amount of moral courage to take the step with the decisiveness that he demonstrated. We also fully admit the truth of the old saying that Rome was not built in a day. Yet, much more must be done by General Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuo Min Tang, before their assurances can be unquestionably accepted."[5]

Although Moloch wanted much more workers' blood, he was for the moment satisfied with his new worshipper, and did not refuse to reward his meritorious services. A few days later, the English Inspector-General of the Customs Administration delivered to Chiang Kai-shek three million dollars as the first instalment of the amount due to China from the increase of import duty permitted by the Washington Conference. The control of the customs, which is the mainstay of China's State finance, is the most powerful means of imperialist domination. No Government can have its share of the customs revenue, if its policy is not approved by Imperialism. For years Shanghai had been the apple of discord between the rival militarists, because the control of that city brings one within the reach of the customs revenue which accumulates there. The desire of the nationalist faction under Chiang Kai-shek to reach Shanghai was dictated by the appetite for the customs revenue which, however could be grabbed only with the approval of Imperialism. The delivery of a part of the customs revenue signified the recognition of the nationalists by Imperialism. One does not voluntarily deliver large amounts of money to those regarded as enemies. Imperialism was still the master of the situation, and awarded a prize only for merit-

orious services. Yesterday it had given the price to Sun Chung-fang or Chang Sung-chang. To-day, Chiang Kai-shek was the happy receiver.

The same stormy development of the mass movement, which compelled the bourgeoisie to give up the struggle against Imperialism, persuaded the latter itself to change its policy. Its main object was to plunder China, to make the largest possible profit out of the misery of the Chinese people. It is immaterial through which means that could be done. Unhesitatingly, Imperialism discards one instrument in favour of a more efficient one. The development of the mass movement and the consequent easy triumph of the Nationalist Army over the militarists showed that these had become antiquated as instruments of imperialist domination. Therefore, when the North Expedition was nearing its goal, British Imperialism announced its readiness to enter into negotiations with a "real and legal" Nationalist Government. Having regard for changed conditions, the old forms of domination—unequal treaties, extra-territorial rights, concessions, etc.—could be possibly modified. These brutally acquired privileges were no longer decisive for the maintenance of imperialist supremacy. They had become antiquated, and could be easily replaced by newer and subtler methods of exploitation. Through superficial concessions regarding the forms and methods of exploitation, the nationalist bourgeoisie could be won over as the new instrument of imperialist domination. These considerations persuaded Imperalism to declare its willingness to recognise a "real and legal" Nationalist Government in place of the old militarist allies. Chiang Kai-shek must fulfil certain conditions to prove that the Nationalist Government represented by him was "real and legal".

The Nationalist Army commanded by Chiang Kai-shek marched into Shanghai on March 22, 1927. It was a small army, composed approximately of three thousand soldiers. But Shanghai had already been conquered. The proletariat had done that. The uprising of the revolutionary democratic masses, under the leadership of the working class, had driven the troops of Sun Chuan-fang out of Shanghai, having inflicted on them heavy casualties and consequently discredited them. While leaving Shanghai, the Northern militarists, protected by Imperialism, had taken revenge upon the workers, who had operated as the shock-troop of the Nationalist Army. Although the Nationalist Army did not march into Shanghai, even when the

way was open, obviously to let the proletariat be massacred by the withdrawing Northern militarists, the working class held the conquered position with unparallelled heroism.

Chiang Kai-shek found the Chinese part of the city of Shanghai under a People's Council elected by the democratic masses. The responsibility he had undertaken in return for the imperialist permission for his entry into Shanghai, was to overthrow the revolutionary administration. Although this was democratic by composition, and supported even by the Chinese big merchants, industrialists and financers, who had no sympathy for the revolution. It had been brought to existence by the action of the working class. Thoroughly democratic, the City Council had a working class majority. Consequently, the Executive, controlled by such a democratic council, could not be corrupted. It was not to be persuaded to sacrifice national interest to the group interest of the bourgeoisie, who would make a compromise with Imperialism for certain concessions. But a frontal attack on the City Council was not permissible. Such a step would reveal the real character of Chiang Kai-shek much too early. The big merchants, industrialists and bankers were with him. But the urban petit-bourgeoisie, the social basis of the Kuo Min Tang was under proletarian influence. Wanting to operate still under the banner of the Kuo Min fang, Chiang Kai-shek must win the petit-bourgeoisie over to his side; he must split the revolutionary democratic bloc. Besides, he did not have under his command sufficient troops to risk a frontal attack upon those who had dealt a staggering blow to the powerful army of Sun Chuan-fang, and had resisted the united forces of international Imperialism.

In the meantime, Nanking was occupied by the Sixth Nationalist Army commanded by Chen Chien, who sympathised with the Wuhan group. The control of Nanking was of great importance for the plans of the clique led by Chiang-Kai-shek. Somewhere else, another nationalist centre must be created in order to dispute the authority of Wuhan. Shanghai was not the suitable place. Chiang Kai-shek could not estabish a government in Shanghai which was virtually under the protection of foreign troops and foreign battleships. Set up under such conditions, a "Nationalist Government" could not possibly veil its real character. Nanking was a more suitable place for the purpose. Therefore, Chiang Kai-shek had to send away all available troops, on whose loyalty he could rely, to prevent Nanking

from siding with Wuhan.

In the first days, Chiang Kai-shek behaved very cautiously in Shanghai, in order to convince the petit-bourgeois masses of his loyalty to the Kuo Min Tang. He heartily welcomed Wang Chin-wei, whom only a year ago he had driven out of the country. The leader of the petit-bourgeois left wing was easily taken in. Instead of proceeding directly to Wuhan, as planned, Wang Chin-wei stopped in Shanghai for a conference not only with Chiang Kai-shek, but also with those right-wing leaders who had combated the Kuo Min Tang since 1924, that is, every since it was reorganised. The conference revealed that the counter-revolutionary conspiracy extended to the innermost circle of the "left" group of Wuhan. The Finance Minister of the Wuhan Government, T.V. Sung, participated in the conference. He was closely connected with the banking world of Shanghai. Tha conference revoked the proclamation of the Wuhan group against Chiang Kai-shek, and resolved that an extraordinary party conference should be held at Nanking with the object of settling the differences. That was a diplomatic victory for Chiang Kai-shek. His position was politically strengthened. Now he was ready to act.

The presence in the conference of such intellectual leaders of modern China as Tsai Yuan-pai, Wu Tse-hui and Li Shen-tsen, in addition to Wang Chin-wei, removed all suspicion ol the petit-bourgeoisie about Chiang Kai-shek's loyalty to the Kuo Min Tang. Then the big bourgeoisie withdrew from the revolutionary City Council of Shanghai. The Chinese Banker's Union promised Chiang Kai-shek a loan of twenty million dollars; three million were directly paid, so that he could set up the "real and legal" Nationalist Government which would win the confidence of the imperialist Powers. The petit-bourgeoisie also went the same way and left the City Council, which consequently became a purely proletarian body; now it could be attacked by the nationalist militarists as "the nest of Communist intrigues against the Kuo Min Tang". Tactical mistakes committed by the Communists helped Chiang Kai-shek.[9]

In order to make up for the inadequacy of the available military forces Chiang Kai-shek secretly brought in bands of village ruffians from the neighbouring countryside. With the cry "against the Communist danger!" he succeeded in winning over the support of the well-to-do peasantry in the adjoining provinces of Kiangsu and Chekiang.

The upper strata of the peasantry were won over for the counter-revolution through the lying propaganda that the Communists wanted to confiscate everything— the land of small proprietor, tools, women, altogether everything.

Thus strengthened from every side, Chiang Kai-shek went over to the offensive. The General Council of the Trade-Unions was forbidden to organise strikes or demonstrations. The Workers' Militia, which had so successfully operated as the vanguard of the Nationalist Army in the capture of Shanghai, was disarmed. In protest, the General Council of the Trade quarters of Chiang Kai-shek to protest against the repressive measures. The deputation was fired upon, and the General Council was declared an illegal body. That was the signal for a general offensive in which hundreds of revolutionary workers were brutally massacred. During the latter part of March, the proletarian quarters of Shanghai were the scene of a fierce counter-revolutionary terror.

Another signal for counter-revolution was the violent rupture of relations with the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. While entering into the short period of revolutionary struggle, the Kuo Min Tang had concluded an alliance with the Workers' Republic. The betrayal of that alliance logically followed from its turning against the revolution. One should remember that, while entering into friendly relations with the Soviet Republics, the Kuo Min Tang had not adopted the Communist programme; the Soviet help for the Chinese nationalists was only conditional upon the struggle against Imperialism. As long as the Chinese nationalists conducted the struggle against imperialist domination, the Soviet Republic was the only foreign Power on whose sympathy and support they could count. When, terrified by the development of the revolution in their own house, they abandoned that struggle, the alliance with the Workers' Republic was no longer necessary. On the contrary, the repudiation of that alliance was an essential condition for the desired understanding with Imperialism. As a matter of fact, the Imperialist demanded complete break with the U.S.S.R. before they would have any relation with the Chinese Nationalist Government. The rupture of relations with the U.S.S.R. unavoidably followed from the bloody suppression of the mass movement, the betrayal of the democratic National Revolution.

Engaged in the bloody massacre of the Shanghai proletariat,

Chiang Kai-shek was characterised by the Communist International as traitor to the cause of national freedom. Enraged at being called what he really was, the Commander-in-Chief of the Nationalist Army followed the foot-steps of the rank reactionary Manchurian war-lord Chiang Tso-lin[7]; he raided the Soviet Consulate in Shanghai. In that act of flagrant violation of international law, not to mention the disloyalty to a proved friend, the nationalists were fully supported by the imperialist Powers. The Soviet Consulate was situated in the International Settlement, which could be invaded by Chinese soldiers only with the permission of the foreign Consuls. The object of the raid was to provide the nationalists with plausible excuses for their crusade against the Communists. It was a search for evidence to prove that the Communists were supported by the U.S.S.R. in their "conspiracy" for overthrowing the nationalists. The documents, alleged to have been found in the Soviet Embassy in Peking, "proved the conspiracy"; but they had been proved to be forged. Nevertheless, they were good enough to serve the purpose of the nationalists. The raids on the Soviet Embassy in Peking and the Consulate in Shanghai, in one place under orders from Cliang Tso-lin and in the other from Chiang Kai-shek, showed that, in their attack against the revolutionary masses, the nationalists were hardly to be distinguished from the reactionary militarists. From that time, the struggle of the Nationalist Army against Militarism was only a comedy. Before long, the Kuo Min Tang flag was to be hoisted in Mukden, where the spirit of Chang Tso-lin still reigned in the person of his worthy son. The behaviour of the nationalists, after they had reached the Yangtse valley, was so counter- revolutionary even from the bourgeois point of view that they opened the door of the Kuo Min Tang to the Manchurian militarists, and permitted the Nationalist Government to establish friendly relations with the son of Chang Tso-lin.

Without the help of the Soviet Union and the support of the revolutionary masses, the nationalists could never attain their military victory. The troops of Chiang Kai-shek were equipped with arms supplied by the Workers' Republic. The officers of the Nationalist Army were trained in the Military Academy of Whampoa, which was established and conducted with help from the same source. Citizens of the U.S.S.R., heroes of the civil war in their own country, stood shoulder to shoulder with the Chinese soldiers in every field of battle. Without the military talent of his Russian adviser Galen, Chiang

Kai-shek, with his staff of youthful amateurs, could not possibly plan and carry out the Expedition. He himself admitted that when he tried to retain Galen's services even after he had turned against the revolution.

It has already been shown how the ground for the advance of the Nationalist Army had been prepared by mass uprisings. Ever since 1917, under the personal leadership of Sun Yat-sen, theKuo Min Tang had made repeated efforts to send a military expedition towards the North. The attempt always ended in a fiasco. None of the expeditions could advance farther than a few miles from the base. Two conditions had to be created before the nationalist North Expedition could be successful: The growth of the revolutionary mass movement, and foreign help, which at the same time would not be a bondage. Those conditions were created as soon as the Kuo Min Tang reorganised itself in the beginning of 1924 into a democratic revolutionary Party. In the first half of 1927, just when the National Democratic Revolution was within an ace of success, the Kuo Min Tang violently broke away from those very conditions for its success, and consequently became' an active instrument of counter-revolution.

The counter-revolution was not confined to Shanghai. On orders from his chief, Li Chai-sun opened the general offensive against the revolution in Canton also, on the pretext of suppressing the Communist movement. On the night of April 15, Canton was declared to be in a state of siege. Hundreds of buildings were raided by soldiers. Nearly two thousand people were arrested either as Communists or their sympathisers. Among them were many cadets of the Whampoa Military Academy. Many girl students were also among the victims of the white terror. Not only the trade-unions, but even the headquarters of the Kuo Min Tang were occupied by soldiers. Those present there were either arrested or driven away. More than half of the arrested were summarily executed, many beheaded in the open street. Martial law was proclaimed. For wearing the hair short, many girls were arrested and even shot down in the streets as Communists. A decree was issued ordering all Communists to report themselves to the military headquarters within ten days. The failure to obey that order was punishable by shooting on sight. The order obviously was a trick. If the Communists could be shot on sight, on their failure to delive r themselves to the hangman, evidently they were

already known to those who ordered them to do so. Why were they not then arrested forthwith? The decree was meant to be an excuse for indiscriminate shooting of all undesirables. The dead are dumb. So all the victims of white terror could be conveniently branded as Communists.

The climax of the counter-revolutionary offensive in Canton was also the raid of the Soviet Consulate, on the pretext that Communists were hidden there. In defending their immunity, several Consular officials were killed. The rest were arrested and deported.

On May 7, the British Foreign Minister Austen Chamberlain informed the Parliament that the nationalists, represented by Chiang Kai-shek, had satisfied Imperialism and had proved themselves capable of establishing a "real and legal" Nationalist Government. The speech referred to the so-called excesses of Nanking. When, in the middle of March, the Nationalist Army occupied Nanking, several foreigners had been killed, and some property of foreigners destroyed. The events might be regretted; but they were altogether unavoidable. In view of the standing provocation through the presence of foreign military and naval forces in the heart of China, it is a matter of surprise that, in course of the revolutionary war, many more lives and property of foreigners were not destroyed. But Imperialism has its own logic. The Powers sent to the Nationalist Government of Wuhan a very sharply formulated joint note, in which they demanded compensation for the losses suffered at Nanking. Specially, the British Government threatened drastic measures, unless the demanded compensation was made without delay. So, the world was somewhat surprised when, even before the demanded compensation had been made, the British Foreign Minister declared that "Great Britain would no longer press her demands because the Nanking excesses have already brought upon the culprits punishment meted out with such a dramatic swiftness, as is seldom in the field of international relations."[8]

That was sufficiently significant; the punishment mentioned by the British Foreign Secretary evidently was the counter-revolutionary terror, which had, in the meantime, been established by the nationalists. It is of great interest to trace the devious course of imperialist diplomacy during the first critical months of 1927. It shows how Imperialism fomented .the crystallisation of the counter-revolutionary forces. In the beginning of the year, when the Nationalist Army with the help of revolutionary mass movement was advancing towards the

Yangtse valley, the Imperialist Powers declared their readiness to come to some understanding with a "real and legal" Nationalist Government. That was a clumsy hint for the right wing of the Kuo Min Tang. It was on that hint that Chiang Kai-shek marched towards Shanghai with the object of uniting with the extreme right wing, composed of the big merchants, industrialists and bankers, who had always strongly disapproved of the revolutionary aberration of the Canton Nationalist Government.

Another move of imperialist diplomacy was the appeal of Great Britain to all the Powers for giving up the opposition to the increased customs duties introduced by the Chinese Government according to the recommendation of the Washington Conference. In the International Customs Conference of Peking in 1925-26, the Imperialist Powers had refused to agree with the Chinese Government's policy of higher tariffs, unless certain pre-conditions were fulfilled. In view of that fact, the policy now advocated by the British Government was clearly a concession to the Chinese bourgeoisie. The British Foreign Minister actually submitted to the Nationalist Government of Wuhan a draft of the projected agreement. The willingness to negotiate with it, a revision of old treaties, and the suggested understanding about the transfer of the Concessions at Hankow and Kiukiang to a Chinese Administration meant *de facto* recognition of the Wuhan Government by Great Britain. Those diplomatic moves strengthened the hands of the bourgeois elements in the Wuhan group who successfully prevented the left wing from acting under the pressure of the masses and go farther in the struggle against Imperialism. Besides, the offer about the increased customs duty whetted the appetite of the Wuhan Government. It strengthened the the tendency towards a union with the rival group, because the benefit of a higher tariff would largely go to those who dominated Shanghai. It was that bait which lured the Finance Minister of the Wuhan Government, T.V. Sung, to Shanghai just when his Government was planning a war against those who were in possession of that city.

British displomacy flirted with the Wuhan Government when Chiang Kai-shek was still fighting his way towards Shanghai. As soon as, through the intermediary of the Shanghai bourgeoisie, the relation with his faction was established, British Imperialism changed its attitude towards Wuhan which was placed under an economic

blockade and a standing threat of armed intervention. Yet, so long as there was no other Government, some relation, though very uncertain, had to be maintained with Wuhan. The Nanking accident was a gift of God. It enabled British Imperialism to beat the Wuhan Government down.

The army which occupied Nanking was under the command of Chiang Kai-shek. He should have been made responsible for the "excesses" committed by his army. Indeed, he was still the Comman-der-in-Chief of the entire Nationalist Army. But the relation was only formal. He had rebelled against the Wuhan group and did not recognise it as the Nationalist Government. In all other questions, the Imperialist Powers were secretly in relation with him. Nevertheless, they held Wuhan responsible for the "excesses" at Nanking and pressed it for compensation. Obviously, the object was to create difficulties for Chiang's opponents, so that his position could be strengthened[9].

In the meantime, another Nationalist Government was established at Nanking. The demand for the compensation for the "excesses" should now be addressed there. But that would be against the adopted course of imperialist diplomacy. Therefore, the generous declaration of the British Foreign Secretary that the demands for compensation for the "excesses" of Nanking would no longer be pressed. But another speech of the same dignitary, made a week later, gave away the game. According to the second speech, the former declaration did not concern the Wuhan Government, which continued to be accused of deliberate indifference about its obligation to hold itself responsible for the Nanking incidents. Chiang Kai-shek was the head of the new Government; he had washed away his previous sins in a stream of workers' blood. So he had made himself *a. persona grata* with Imperialism. But the matter was entirely different with the Wuhan Government which must still be driven on the bloody road of atonement. Therefore, the spokesman of British Imperialism shook the mailed fist against recalcitrant Wuhan, while he smiled faintly upon Nanking. He declared that the British Govern- -ment was considering the reoccupation of the Hankow Concession, that the Wuhan Government did not represent anybody, and therefore the British diplomatic representative would be withdrawn from there. The next day the British representative left Wuhan. A new Nationalist Government had arisen: it was definitely counter-revolutionary and was, therefore, easily to be influenced by Imperialism.

It was no longer necessary to flirt with Wuhan. The best method for helping the crystallisation of the counter-revolutionary forces was the transfer of the patronage to the rival.

When the counter-revolution was marching forward in the South, East and North, the Wuhan Government was not altogether immune from it. The representatives of trade, industry and finance, striving for an agreement with Imperialism, were also in the Wuhan Government. The military forces of Wuhan were dominated by feudal landlords who were full-blooded counter-revolutionaries. Behind the comedy of a struggle against Chiang Kai-shek, the Wuhan group also was preparing for the counter-revolution. In contrast to the bloody acts of its rival, its behaviour, in the beginning, was not so clear. Its first act was to restrain the anti-imperialist struggle with the object of coming to some understanding with the foreign Powers.

The following order was issued on April 23rd through a Manifesto of the Central Committee of the Wuhan Kuo Min Tang: "It is the duty of all the supporters of the Nationalist Government to see to it most scrupulously that the foreigners are not provoked. . . . Their persons and properties must be carefully protected, and, specially, everything possible must be done in order to help them in promoting their commercial interests"[10]. The Manifesto was issued immediately upon the arrival of imperialist battleships at Hankow. But that was not the real reason. A strike had broken out in the Japanese textile mills. The employers had refused to redress the grievances of the workers; these, therefore, demanded boycott of the Japanese Concession. That development was very undesirable for the Government which desired to win over the support of Japanese Imperialism, while the rival clique had secured the patronage of other imperialist Powers. The appearance of the battleships gave the Kuo Min Tang the opportunity to argue that the imperialist Powers were looking for a pretext for an armed intervention. It was declared that, if the strike in the Japanese mill was not immediately called off, then Japan, with the backing of all the Powers, would take military measures. The trade-unions were taken in; not only the strike was called off, but they endorsed the Manifesto of the Kuo Min Tang. In a proclamation issued on April 23rd, the Hupeh General Council of Labour prescribed a whole series of punishments for workers who would not obey the decree of the Kuo Min Tang as regards the pro-

tection of foreign property and the promotion of foreign trade. The day after, yet another Manifesto was issued by the same body. It restricted the power of trade-unions and was counter-signed by the Central Committee of the Kuo Min Tang. Until then, the trade-unions had wielded considerable power in the municipal administration.

The danger of immediate intervention was not great. The imperialist Powers wanted only to terrorise the nationalists, and force them to give in. It was a ridiculous sight; more than a dozen battle-cruisers standing before a city which could not possibly withstand the operation of any single of them. Even the economic blockade was a double-edged sword. It could not be kept up indefinitely without injuring the interests of the blockaders just as much as of the blockaded. Getting its means of subsistence from the hinterland, Wuhan was sure to come victorious out of a struggle of long duration. The masses were ready for the struggle, ready to make the necessary sacrifice. But other factors also contributed to the situation; a long blockade demanded sacrifice not only from the masses; the patriotism of the upper classes, particularly the traders, was to be tested. It was under their pressure, in the first place, that the Kuo Min Tang gave up the struggle against Imperialism. The masses should sacrifice— not for the revolution, but for the counter-revolution. They could obey the order to help the foreigners carry on their trade, an order issued on the pretext of "revolutionary discipline", only if they were prepared to give up all claims to better conditions of life. Any demand of the workers for the slightest increase of wages or improvement of labour conditions was replied by the employers, foreign as well as native, with the closing of mills and factories. That obstructed trade. The workers must sacrifice, so that the Imperialists and their native agents could fill their pockets without any difficulty. There was no limit to the suppression of the workers. For instance, the workers on the quays and rickshaw coolies were forbidden to ask for more than given voluntarily. This order was issued on the ground that, whenever the coolies asked for more than offered, there was conflict with foreigners, and such conflicts could easily lead to unrest and agitation giving occasion for armed intervention.

But the threat of foreign intervention was not the real danger for the Revolution and the Nationalist Government; it came from the intrigues in their own risks. While still conducting a campaign of

words against Chiang Kai-shek, the agents of the bourgeoisie and the feudal-militarists inside the Wuhan group were themselves preparing to travel in his foot-steps. In course of time, internal decomposition became more pronounced. In the cities, traders and industrialists demanded suppression of the labour movement; in the countryside, the power was still in the hands of the landowning classes. Supported by the military forces of the Nationalist Government, they declared war upon the peasantry. Soon it came to be an open secret that the Nationalist Army was conspiring against the Nationalist Government. The Wuhan Generals established clandestine contact with the Nanking Group, and, instigated by the latter, busily prepared for a counterrevolutionary *coup d'etat.*

In the middle of May, Hsia Tao-yin, Commander of a regiment stationed on the railway line between Wuhan and Changsha (the capital of Hunan), rebelled. He marched towards the seat of the Nationalist Government in order to overthrow it. The attitude of the Nationalist Government was such as gave rise to the suspicion that it connived with the revolt against itself. Hsia Tao-yin. with a pitiable army of hardly 2000 men, reached the outskrits of Woochang without any resistance. Helplessly, the Nationalist Government awaited its fall on the pretext that it had no power to resist the rebels, all the available forces having been sent to the North. The situation revealed the motive of the hasty expedition towards Peking. Wuhan should be disarmed to facilitate the counter-revolutionary attack. In reality, however, the Nationalist Government was by no means so helpless as it pretended to be. There was a sufficiently strong garrison at Hankow. But it obviously sympathised with the rebels; the latter had dared start on the adventure with such a small force precisely because they knew that the Hankow garrison would join them in the decisive moment. There could be no doubt about what was to be done, provided that the Nationalist Government itself was not a party to the conspiracy. Either the Hankow garrison was loyal; in that case, it must obey the order to suppress the counter-revolutionary uprising. Or, it was suspected of sympathy for the rebels, in which case it should have been disarmed immediately. The Government did neither this nor that, thereby exposing its complicity with the counter-revolutionary conspiracy.[11] In that critical moment, it became quite clear that the Kuo Min Tang, in the interest of the revolution, should break away from compromising allies, and stand alone

with the support of the masses. When there was uprising against the Nationalist Government, and military forces, formally owing allegiance to it, were conspiring with the rebels, then the only way out was to arm the masses which had demonstrated their loyalty to the revolution.

The workers in the Hanyang Arsenal laboured day and night, so that the Nationalist Army at the front could be kept supplied. If they were given only a part of the weapons they manufactured, the workers could easily disarm the counter-revolutionary garrison. An open declaration by the Kuo Min Tang that the military officers were rebelling against the Nationalist Government, because the latter wanted to give land to the peasants, would have won over the soldiers who were all landless peasants. But the Kuo Min Tang neither wanted to arm the workers, nor give land to the peasants. Consequently, it could not defend the revolution and joined the conspiracy against it.

Nevertheless, the conspiracy was frustrated by the joint action of the Communists and revolutionary intellectuals. Practically all the troops had been sent away from Woochang, obviously to make the way clear for the rebels. The city was defended by a couple of hundred soldiers; but the garrison commander happened to be a Communist. The rebels appearing on the outskrits of the city, the Communist commander could no longer wait for the instruction of the Nationalist Government, the headquarters of which were situated just on the other side of the river. As there was no chance of any reinforcement coming from Hankow, the garrison commander Yeh-tin acted on his own initiative. He got together an irregular army of about 1500 men, including several hundred students from the local military school. They were mostly petit-bourgeois intellectuals, all members of the Kuo Min Tang. After a week's hard fight, the rebels were driven back. During that historic struggle, the Kuo Min Tang and the Nationalist Government were still further exposed. The Communist Party proposed the publication of a Proclamation in which the mutinous officers should be declared rebels, and the soldiers called upon not to obey them. The nationalist leaders refused to accept that proposition; presumably, they were afraid that such an appeal would decompose not only the rebel troops, but the entire Nationalist Army. So nothing was done to decompose the insurgent camp. The tragedy of the situation was that even many Communist

leaders shared the opinion of the Nationalist Government.

The nationalist leaders tried to justify their treacherous attitude with the argument that neither Hsia Tao-yin nor the subsequent insurgents were rebelling against the Nationalist Government; that they were against Communism. It was a very weak argument which could not convince anybody with the least insight of the situation. Of course, the insurgents did not declare openly that they would overthrow the Nationalist Government; their battle-cry was "down with the Communists". But why did they want to kill the Communists? Because these defended the interests of peasants. The Communist Party supported the demand of peasantry that the Nationalist Government should carry through the agrarian programme of the Kuo Min Tang. The masses (peasants, workers, artisans, small traders, poor intellectuals etc.) under the leadership of the Communist Party, emphatically demanded the realisation of the programme of Democratic Revolution, while the Kuo Min Tang vacillated, and conspired with reaction. The insurgents were counter-revolutionaries, because they wanted to hinder the accomplishment of the bourgeois democratic revolution. The objectively arrayed themselves against the Kuo Min Tang and the Nationalist Government, in so far as these could be regarded as the organs of bourgeois democratic revolution. Had the Kuo Min Tang acted as the courageous leader of the bourgeois democratic revolution, then, it would be condemned by its feudal allies as the instrument of Communism. The spectre of Communism, however, was a myth. The Communists became the target of the counter-revolutionary fire, because they took over the leadership of the bourgeois democratic revolution when it was betrayed by the Kuo Min Tang.

In that moment, the Communists were fighting for a clearly democratic programme. Confiscation of land, demanded by them, excluded the property of small holders and officers of the Nationalist Army[12]. The peasant unions, under Communist leadership, cooperated with all the dimocratic elements for the creation of village self-governments as the organs of the revolutionary struggle against feudal-patriarchal reaction. In the cities, the Communists championed the interests of the middle-classes together with those of the proletaiiat. The demand for higher wages and better working conditions was linked up with the demand for the lowering of high taxes which placed great burden on the small traders and artisans. As

a matter of fact, the Communist Party made so many concessions as approximated to a betrayal of the working class and the revolution.

At the end of May, that is, soon after the defeat of Hsia Tao-yin's revolt, there happened something much more serious. Again the war-cry, "Down with the Communists", was raised. But this time, it was an open uprising against the Kuo Min Tang and the Nationalist Government. The officers of the Nationalist forces stationed at Changsha, capitals of the province of Hunan, made a *coup d'etat.* They overthrew the Provincial Government, but its members in prison, dissolved the local committee of the Kuo Min Tang, closed the political school conducted by the Peasants Department of the Kuo Min Tang, and adopted all the usual repressive measures against the mass organisations and the Communists. The insurgents were direct subordinates of the Commander-m-Chief of the Nationalist Army, Tang Shen-chi. From the front, he remained in telegraphic communication with them. The Kuo Min Tang as well as the Nationalist Government found themselves in a very precarious position. Only they could do little, even if they wanted. Presently the Government endorsed the action of the insurgents, evidently under the pressure of Tang Shen-chi. The Provincial Government set up by the insurgents was recognised, several members of the old, overthrown, Government entered it. But the local committee of the Kuo Min Tang was not restored. On the demand of the insurgents, a commission was set up with dictatorial powers to purify the party, as the condition for the new election of the Provincial Committee.

The feudal militarist rebels, thus completely backed by the Nationalist Centre, began the bloody suppression of the peasantry. Against the groundless assertion that the nationalist leaders had to turn against the Communists owing to the latter's excesses, it must be mentioned that, in the bitter struggle just begun in Hunan, all the local organisations of the Kuo Min Tang joined the peasantry in the effort to overthrow the counter-revolutionary clique of Chanesha There were Communists in those organisations. But the majority of the members came the middle-classes. It was, therefore, no struggle between the nationalists and the Communists, as the Kuo Min Tans leaders asserted. It was a struggle between the leaders and the membership of the Kuo Min Tang itself. Workers, peasants, artisans traders, employees, students, teachers, together composing the

overwhelming majority of the nation, wanted to carry the revolution forward, in order to subvert the conditions of social stagnation, political suppression and cultural backwardness. Opposed to them were the feudal militarists who had joined the nationalist movement for strengthening themselves. They were bitterly opposed to any alteration of the established social relations. The bourgeoisie did want certain changes of those conditions. But they shrank from any far-reaching measure. In the first place, they themselves were interested in the pre-capitalist exploitation of the village; in the second place, mass awakening threatened to reduce their profits from industry and trade; thirdly, they were afraid that the revolution would go so far as to prevent them from being the only beneficiaries thereof. Foreign Imperialism, native Capitalism and Feudalism had antagonisms among themselves; but they came together in the common struggle against the revolution which threatened them all.

It cannot be maintained that the Nationalist Government remained passive against the advance of counter-revolution only out of cowardice; it was a betrayal of the revolution. If the Wuhan clique was really the left wing of the Kuo Min Tang, if it really represented the membership of the party against its feudal-bourgeois leadership, then, it would have behaved differently. Then, it would find no complication in the demands of the workers and peasants; on the contrary, it should have used those demands as the lever for organising a movement strong enough to overthrow Imperialism and destroy native reaction. Then it would have recognised in the Communists true brothers-in-arms, instead of attacking them and with them the revolution itself. The atmosphere of the feudal-bourgeois Wuhan clique kept the petit-bourgeois leaders like Wang Chin-wei away from the pressure of the masses. They became positively counter-revolutionary, even when the welfare of the social elements represented by themselves still required the revolution.

The leader of petit-bourgeois radicalism, Wang Chin-wei, was in a quandary. He was a tragic figure standing helplessly on board the sinking ship of National Democratic Revolution. The foolish tactics of the Communists—Borodin's policy of a military combination under Tang Shen-chi's leadership—had driven Wang Chin-wei into the embrace of the reactionary clique. But it was difficult for him to turn his coat all of a sudden. His position was not based

upon the control of armed forces; nor had he come to prominence through factional intrigues. He was the chosen successor of Sun Yat-sen. Democratic radicalism was the basis of his tremendous popularity. He could trifle with his political creed inherited from Sun Yat-sen only at the risk of his political life. Such a figure could not be disregarded, when very available weapon should be used for what it was worth to avert the disaster which appeared to be imminent. The odds were turning against the Communists who had so vigorously disarmed themselves. Besides, the attack was not upon the Communists alone. It was against the National Democratic Revolution. Objectively, the urban petit-bourgeois masses were also under attack. In such a situation, efforts should be made for a closer fighting alliance with the urban petit-bourgeois masses to resist the march of counter-revolution. Such an alliance was still an objective necessity. Counter-revolution might still be checked, if the effort could be made successfully.

But Borodin's policy of giving predominance to the "left" militarists had driven Wang Chin-wei to the background. He had returned to China on the advice of the Russians to place himself at the head of the Wuhan Government. But in Wuhan, he found himself in an ambiguous position. He was the formal head of the Government, which however was at the mercy of the "left" militarists. He began to feel that the Communists had deceived him. In that equivocal position, he was naturally bitter and wavering. He was still the idol of the democratic masses. A radical opposition to overthrow the reactionaries could not possibly be organised except with him as the leader. Therefore, it was all-important to restore his confidence and reassure him of the support promised to him in Moscow.[13]

The bourgeoisie turning against the revolution, the lower middle-class could either go over to the camp of counter-revolution, or make closer alliance with the working classes. As a matter of fact, the democratic middle-classes, in course of the development of the revolution, had come closer and closer to the toiling masses. When reaction started the offensive, in the beginning, they stood with the workers and peasants. Petit-bourgeois leaders like Wang Chin-wei went over to the counter-revolution, because they did not know the tendencies of their own following. Cut off from their own social base, in the critical moment they became the ideologists of fcudal-bour-

geois reaction. They swore by the principles of Sun Yat-sen and declared against class struggle; thereby they endorsed the reactionary strivings for suppressing the peasantry. Wang Chin-wei knew that his opposition to the agrarian reform must lead to a betrayal of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. Therefore, he made the ridiculous effort to prove that the Chinese Revolution was different not only from the Russian Revolution, but also could not follow the course even of the Great French Revolution. He maintained that the main task of the Chinese Revolution was the overthrow of foreign Imperialism, and that the accomplishment of this task required the united front of all revolutionary nationalist elements. All other tasks of the revolution, which may disturb the anti-imperialist united front, must therefore be set aside.

Lest the support of the exploiting parasitic minority might be forfeited, Wang Chin-wei openly broke the promise which the Kuo Min Tang had made to the masses in order to win them over for the National Revolution. The precarious unity of the nationalist ranks must be maintained on the terms of a small minority which always placed its sectional interest above the interest of the nation. The majority must make sacrifices. Should the masses not agree with the logic of the petit-bourgeois theoretician of reaction, then, they must be suppressed; and the bloody violence of counter-revolution also served the interest of National Revolution! The united front, established in this way, was naturally not the unity of all national-revolutionary forces. These were excluded from the alliance which came to be an alliance of the bourgeoisie with the feudal-militarists against the National Revolution and, therefore, an instrument for maintaining the imperialist domination in a slightly altered form.

According to Wang Chin-wei, the most elementary demands of the masses hindered the anti-imperialist struggle; therefore, they should not be supported. The Communists also regarded the overthrow of Imperialism as the immediate task of the revolution; but as they would not agree that sanction of the unrestricted exploitation of the masses was a condition for united front, they were damned as enemies of the Kuo Min Tang.

Revolutions are mile-stones on the way of social progress. They solve the social problems of the given epoch. In China, there were great social problems to solve. The Chinese National Revolution could be compared with the Great French Revolution, and even with

the Russian Revolution, because, essentially, it had to solve the same social problems as done by both. The overthrow of Imperialism is a political task, the accomplishment of which will create the conditions for the solution of fundamental social problems. Experience shows that the political and social tasks of the Chinese National Revolution could not be separated. They are interwoven with each other, and must be solved together. When a nationalist movement seeks to avoid its fundamental social tasks, it defeats its own political object; it capitulates before Imperialism and becomes counter-revolutionary.

In the period of 1924-27, the Chinese Revolution differed from the classical bourgeois revolutions only in so far as it had to fight, in addition to the native feudal reaction, an external force which was very closely allied with the internal enemy. But Wang Chin-wei maintained that the revolutionary struggle in China must assume different forms, because "the Chinese revolution has objects diflerent from those of the French Revolution".[14] According to him, the object of the Chinese National Revolution was neither the destruction of feudal-patriarchal reaction, nor the establishment of democratic freedom. Its only object was to end foreign domination. But what would happen when that object was attained? As a loyal disciple of Sun Yat-sen, Wang Chin-wei gave a clear answer. "The masses must have the necessary revolutionary training; for this purpose, they must remain under the leadership of the Kuo Min Tang which will guide them through the period of civil war as well as the period of trusteeship. The establishment of a Constitutional Government can begin when the situation will be free from all possible danger." According to this programme, the Chinese people, for an unlimited time, must be subordinated to the dictatorship of the Kuo Min Tang, which had proved itself in action to be just as bitter an enemy of the masses as Imperialism and Militarism. For this object, the foreign domination should be ended.

Since the dream of dictatorial power could not be realised until Imperialism was overthrown, and since experience had shown that without the support of the masses the Kuo Min Tang was powerless, Wang Chin-wei tried to deceive the workers and peasants with petit-bourgeois demagogy. He declared that the National Revolution must develop with two slogans: "Support of the workers and peasants", and "Workers, peasants, traders, students and [soldiers—unite!" Had he honestly acted according to these slogans, he would not have

betrayed the revolution. But he wanted to deceive not only the workers and peasants, but also the oppressed middle-classes. The abiding confidence of the masses could not be won by a party which might shout the first slogan, but at the same time violently suppress the workers and peasants movement. In order to explain the .crass contradiction between the words and the deeds of the Kuo Min Tang, Wan Chin-wei emphasised that "political power must be defended with revolutionary (!) means. After the accomplishment of this task, the peaceful solution of economic problems will begin, namely, the division of land and State supervision of capitalist industries".

Violence is justified as a "revolutionary means" when it is employed against the strivings of the toiling masses for ameliorating their unbearable conditions of life. But the exploited masses were deprived of the right to fight for land and bread. They should patiently wait, and work for national liberation; starve and fight, until peaceful times would return, that is to say, until the bourgeoisie, with their feudal allies, had consolidated their power under the patronage of foreign Imperialism. After they had carried through the struggle for the overthrow of Imperialism, the toiling masses should live under the trusteeship of the Kuo Min Tang, continue labouring and starving as ever, so that the capitalists and landlords could grab still more than under unrestricted imperialist domination.

Wang Chin-wei's second slogan—"Workers, peasants, traders, students and soldiers, unite!"—was suitable to the situation. But the desired unity could no longer be realised under the flag of the Kuo Min Tang, which was dominated by feudal-bourgeois reaction, had made peace with Militarism, and was striving for a compromise with foreign Imperialism. The National Democratic Revolution was still far from complete triumph. But the Kuo Min Tang could lead it farther only if it would revolutionise itself. The petit-bourgeoisie could still play an important role in the struggle for national freedom, but not as the handmaid of feudal-bourgeois reaction, providing theoretical justification for its bloody crusades against the revolutionary working class. The petit-bourgeoisie could play that role only as an ally of the proletariat.

They were marching in that direction. All the local organisations of the Kuo Min Tang were under Communist influence. Socially, they were composed just as Wang Chin-wei desired. The Communists were fighting not immediately for Socialism, nor for the establishment

of a proletarian dictatorship. They were fighting as the vanguard of the National Democratic Revolution—for destroying feudal-patriarchal reaction, for conquering democratic freedom, and for the overthrow of the imperialistic yoke. The Communists knew that the oppressed middle-classes, resisting feudal-bourgeois reaction, could not be organised in the party of the proletariat. Therefore, they were making the effort to save the Kuo Min Tang—by revolutionising it. This purpose of the Communists corresponded with the will of the oppressed middle-class. The antagonism between the membership and the leading clique of the Kuo Min Tang had become so acute that the party could no longer serve as a weapon in the struggle for national freedom, unless it liberated itself from the domination of the big bourgeoisie and the dictation of the feudal militarists.

The effort of the Communists to save the Kuo Min Tang was condemned as conspiracy by Wang Chin-wei and his like. The left nationalist leaders betrayed the oppressed middle-classes, when the Communists were defending their interests. The Communists proposed to develop the revolution with Wang Chin-wei's Slogan—Workers, peasants, traders, students and soldiers, unite!" They proposed that the leadership of the Kuo Ming Tang should be taken over by a revolutionary democratic Bloc that the Nationalist Government should be purged of the counter-revolutionary elements, and create a military force of its own. To proceed in this line would have meant the replacement of Chiang Kai-shek by Wang Chin-wei as the real leader of the Kuo Min Tang. The tactics recommended by the Communists was the logical consequence of the conflict inside the Kuo Min Tang.

But the fate of the Kuo Min Tang was sealed by the debacle of the hero of petit-bourgeois radicalism, the seagreen incorruptible of the Chinese bourgeois revolution, the true torch-bearer of Sun Yat-senism. It was no more to be saved. It had come to be an active , organ of counter-revolution, not because it had betrayed the principles of Sun Yat-sen as Wang Chin-wei and other leftists complained later, when they were driven out of power by the coalition of the big bourgeoisie and Militarism. Every bloody act of the Kuo Min Tang and its Nationalist Government could be justified by the principles of Sun Yat-sen, and was so justified. The left leaders of Wuhan marched to the Counter-revolutionary camp of Nanking, holding high the banner of Sun Yat-senism. The territories under the Wuhan Government also became a scene of shameful

oppression, just as the spheres of influence of its rivals and enemies. Just when the militarists of Wuhan were vying with Chiang Kai-shek at Shanghai, Li Chai-sun at Canton and even Chang Tso-lin, in the butchery of workers and peasants, just then petit-bourgeois nationalist theoreticians like Wang Chin-wei and Kuo Min-yu preached the dogma of the Master, that in the holy land of ancient wisdom, there should be no class struggle.

The climax was reached towards the end of June 1927. The Wuhan Government received a telegram from Feng Yu-hsiang who suggested that some of its members should be sent abroad for the sake of health, that the Russian advisers should be relieved of their duties, and that the Communists should be expelled from the Kuo Min Tang. There followed an ultimatum from Chiang Kai-shek. That was the signal for some Wuhan militarists to act. Events followed as if previously planned. The Workers' Militia was disarmed; trade-unions were closed; demonstrations were forbidden on the threat of shooting; Communists were arrested *en masse.* The decisive blow had been so well prepared for weeks that there was very little resistance. In the cities, the mass movement had been demoralised and disorganised by restrictions placed upon its activities on all possible pretexts. The peasant uprising in Hunan was suppressed, in the beginning with its sanction and then by the Nationalist Government itself. The local organisations of the Kuo Min Tang were taken aback by the somersault of the leader in whom they had so firmly believed.

The small detachment of the Nationalist Army, which perhaps could put up a resistance against the counter-revolutionary offensive, had been nearly annihilated in the premature advance upon Peking; it had cleared the way for Feng Yu-hsiang and Chiang Kai-shek to unite their forces. The rest of the Iron Army was so exhausted that it wanted to go back home—to Kwhagtung. It had very little fighting power left. Thus, the decisive blow of counter-revolution met with practically no resistance. But the militarists did not trust the superficial calm. They would have no peace until the hated Communists were completely crushed. And they applied themselves to the task with despatch and determination.

The ground was prepared for the happy re-union of the rival nationalist cliques. Representatives of both the sides met in a conference which was the scene of a long embittered struggle of

conflicting personal ambitions and group interests. Out of that conference rose the united National Government of Nanking with the mission of consolidating counter-revolution. But the revolution was not yet completely defeated. Many bloody battles had still to be fought before the counter-revolution could secure to some extent its position of power. The history of China throughout the year 1927 was the history of mass murder unparallelled in its ferocity and in the number of its victims. In comparison to it, even the terrible massacre after the defeat of the Taiping Uprising sinks into insignificance. In modern history, perhaps there is only one parallel—the massacre of Vendee in 1793. Owing to the extraordinary backwardness of the means of communication in China, it is impossible to estimate even approximately the number of those who fell victims to the blind rage running wild throughout the year 1927, beginning from March until the early months of the next year. However, it is reported that more than twently-five thousand Communists were killed. And in view of the fact that three million workers and nine million peasants were organised in the struggle under Communist leadership, it would not be an exaggeration to assume that no less than a quarter of a million non-Communists also met the same fate. The brutality of that butchery defies all description. Out of that orgy of terror rose the Nationalist Government of Nanking which swore loyalty to the memory and principles of Sun Yat-sen, and wanted to unite the country under the authority of the bourgeoisie. We shall see how far it was successful.

Notes

1. Report of the peasant unions of Kwangtung to the *Second Delegates' Conference of the Kuo Min Tang,* Canton, February, 1926.

2. Although outside of Manchuria and some of the Northern Provinces, large capitalist farms are seldom to be found in China, yet concentration of landed property takes place through the operation of the usurers' capital. Indebtedness compels the peasantry to sell the land. But owing to the backwardness of large-scale modern industry, only a small part of the peasants thus expropriated can find employment in the cities as wage-slaves. Consequently, they infest the country-side as soldiers (regular or irregular), bandits or the rural riff-raff. Every Chinese village has its riff-raff or the rural lumpen-proletariat. They are utilised by the ruling classes as the weapon for terrorising the peasantry.

3. Report of the peasant unions to the *Kuo Min Tang Conference,* February, 1926.

4. *Ibid.*

5. Retranslated from German.

6. See Chapter XXI.

7. On April 6, 1927, the troops of Cheng Tso-lin raided the Soviet Embassy in Peking, the offices of the Russian East-Asiatic Bank and of the Chinese Eastern Railway. All those buildings were in the "Embassy Quarters" which, according to the stipulations of old treaties, was not Chinese soil. Therefore, the raid must have been sanctioned by the foreign Diplomatic Corps. The fact that the Commander of the raiding troops was armed with a document signed by the Doyen of the Diplomatic Corps, proves that Chang Tso-lin's act of violence was fully approved by international Imperialism. More than twenty Chinese employees of the raided offices were arrested as Communists, and most of them were directly executed. Among the victims was Professor Li Ta-chao, a founder of the Communist Party and one of the intellectual leaders of modern China. He was strangled to death.

8. Chamberlain's speech in the British Parliament on May 7, 1927. (Retranslated from German).

9. The proof that the Powers acted with this motive is delivered by observers who cannot be suspected of anti-imperialist tendency : "The Nanking episode had another, very unexpected result. Instead of being discredited with the Powers, Chiang Kai-shek was hardly involved in the affairs; that was thanks to his quick and energetic action against the Communists. All demands for compensation from the foreign Powers were, on the contrary, made from the Government at Hankow, and some of these demands it could not possibly fulfill even if it wanted, because it had no power over Chiang or his officers and his troops." (H.O. Chapman, "The Chinese Revolution, 1926-27", Retranslated from German).

10. *The Peeples Tribune,* Hankow, April 23rd, 1927.

11. A weak attempt was made to disarm a regiment of the Eighth Army stationed at Hanyang. But that was not done on the order of the Nationalist Government. The garrison commander, himself known to be a

counter-revolutionary, gave the order most probably to hide the real game with that gesture.

12. That was provided for in the resolution on the agrarian question adopted by the *Fifth Congress of the Communist Party,* held in the beginning of May 1927. In subsequent resolutions of the Central Committee, special emphasis was laid on this limitation of the programme of land confiscation.

13. "On'this way back to China, he (Wang Chin-wei) had passed through Moscow. There he was promised full support of the Soviet Government as well as of the Communist International.....! managed to send a radio

message to Moscow demanding the reassurance. On the other hand, to him I proposed a concrete plan of action which should be undertaken to re-establish his effective leadership of the Wuhan Government. He agreed with the plan, provided that the necessary help would be forthcoming.

"The substance of the plan was : Local conference for setting up the platform of National Revolution; an emergency Party Congress of delegates elected at the local conferences;

endorsement by the emergency

Congress of the platform of National Revolution; re-election of the party leadership and exclusion from the new leadership of all who did not unconditionally agree to stand on the platform of National Revolution. The main planks in the platform of National Revolution were : Confiscation of landed property over a fixed minimum limit; to empower the peasants' unions to carry out the confiscation and to distribute the confiscated land to the actual cultivators; freedom of the peasantry from all charges and levies except a unitary land tax ; abolition of the *Llkin* (internal customs); disarming of the military forces of the rural reaction: formation of village militia out of the members of the peasants' unions ; investing of peasants unions with the functions of village self-government; nationalisation of mines and railways ; eight hours day and minimum wages for the industrial workers ; establishment of Workers' Councils in factories, etc. ; formation of a Workers' Militia ; creation of a revolutionary army directly under the Nationalist Government : struggle against the traitors of Nanking : and vigorous prosecution of the anti-imperialist fight." (M.N. Roy, "My Experience in China", pp. 70-72).

A few days later, a telegram came from Moscow with the desired reassurance. Among other things, it suggested the following : "Confiscate the land ; destroy the present unreliable generals, arm twenty thousand Communists, and select fifty thousand worker and peasant elements to create a new army ; put new worker and peasant elements in the Central Executive Committee of the Kuo Ming Tang to take the place of the old members; and organise a revolutionary Court with a well known member of the Kuo Ming Tang as its Chairman to try the reactionary officer." (Stalin, "Marxism and the National and Colonial Question").

"It was almost too late when the urgently needed reassurance came. Meanwhile, believing that the Communists had betrayed him, Wang Chin-wei had entered into negotiations with the light wing which was clamouring for the blood of the Communists to propitiate Chiang Kai-shek..... I

thought at that juncture, a final effort must be made to regain the confidence of Wang Chin-wei. I communicated to him the message from Moscow.....It was a repetition of the promise made to him personally in

Moscow..... Besides, the plan was already known to him. He had

expressed his agreement with it. He was willing to stand by his agreement if I could produce definite proof that the necessary help would be forthcoming.....It is reported that he showed the telegram to his associates

who were already in communication with Nanking..... The counterrevolution was in the open offensive in Wuhan itself many days before the arrival of the telegram. Associates of Wang Chin-wei, known reactionaries like Sun Fo, Eugen Chen, Tan Yan-kei, trusted by Borodin and the leaders of the C.P. as left-wingers, had come to a secret understanding with Chiang Kai-shek and were only waiting to take Wang Cbin-wei along into the camp of counter-revolution". (M.N. Roy, "My Experience in China", pp. 72-73).

14. This and the following quotations are taken from a series of articles written by Wang Chin-wei in the official organ of the Kuo Min Tang in the spring and early summer of 1927:

CHAPTER XX

THE COMMUNIST PARTY

The collapse of the Wuhan Government, the destruction of the Kuo Min Tang by the petit-bourgeois left-wing leaders going over to camp of feudal-bourgeois reaction, marked the close of a stage in the development of the Chinese Revolution. There followed a period of transition. In the historical sense, the revolution still remained bourgeois-democratic. The historic tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution were not yet accomplished in China. The pre-capitalist relations of property in land were not yet abolished. The patriarchal family was not yet replaced by the individual as the basic unit of society. There was no democratic government as yet. The centralisation of the country under one modern democratic State was a task which still remained to be accomplished. Militarism was not yet destroyed; only, one group of militarists replaced another. Lastly, imperialist domination was not yet overthrown. China still continued under conditions which rendered normal economic development impossible. The nation was not yet free. The legal and political pre-conditions for the unhampered development even of productive (as against parasitic trading) capitalism were still to be created. The nationalist bourgeoisie, in alliance with feudal landlords and the new militarists, would stop the revolution at that stage.

But the bourgeois democratic revolution is historically necessary not only for the bourgeoisie. Although, immediately and in the first place, it benefits the bourgeoisie, a successful bourgeois democratic revolution raises the entire society on a higher level of development. It creates conditions in which a struggle for the higher forms of freedom can be undertaken. Therefore, the exploited masses carry the bourgeois revolution farther even when the bourgeoisie turn against it. Not only in China was it so. The Great French Revolution

itself could succeed only after overcoming the resistance of the big bourgeoisie. It destroyed the ancient regime and created a new order only after it had outgrown the leadership of the Girondists. The toiling masses were the driving force of Jacobinism. It was more so in China, because there the bourgeoisie, for historical reasons, could not go even nearly so far as the European bourgeoisie in the period of the classical bourgeois revolution. In France, for example, the petit-bourgeois leaders also hesitated; they were driven forward under the pressure of the masses. In China, they turned against the revolution when the masses wanted to go ahead against their will. The working class, until then the driving force of the revolution, now became its leader. The change in the leadership influenced the social character of the revolution. The bourgeois revolution ordinarily establishes the capitalist order because it is led by a class which owns the means of capitalist production. If it is carried through under the leadership of a class which is opposed to capitalist exploitation as well as to Feudalism, then, the bourgeois revolution cannot stop at the establishment of bourgeois democracy. In so far as it abolishes the pre-capitalist social relation, it still retains objectively the character of a bourgeois revolution. But its consequences go farther than Capitalism. They lead directly towards the construction of Socialism through a period of transitional economic development. In China, the revolution assumed certain proletarian-socialist features already before the completion of its bourgeois-democratic tasks.

In order to play the role allotted to it by history, nearly, to carry through the democratic revolution, betrayed by the bourgeoisie, the working class needed an organ of struggle of its own. That was the Communist Party. When, in the first month of 1927, the National Revolution reached its climax, there were about 2,500,000 workers organised in trade-unions; the membership of the peasant unions was nearly three times as much. That powerful army of the organised masses was led by the Communist Party. The growth of the party itself had been phenomenal. Founded in 1920, the party remained a small under-ground group until it made an alliance with the Kuo Min lang in 1924. The great mass movement of 1925 opened before it an immense field of activity. It became the leader of that movement. Since then, it grew rapidly in membership as well as political influence. The astonishing rapidity of its growth is evidenced by the following facts: The membership of the party increased twenty times

between 1925 to 1927. At the end of 1924 the party had 953 members. The Fifty Party Congress held in May 1927 at Wuhan represented more than 50,000 members. In addition, the Communist Youth League had 35,000 members. The Communists led not only the powerful army of organised workers and peasants, counted in millions; they were also the most active element inside the Kuo Min Tang. Practically all the local organisations of the Kuo Min Tang were under Communist leadership. The amazing growth in number and political influence showed that the Communist Party was deeply rooted in the conditions of the country. It had come into existence because the situation demanded it.

The entry of the Communists into the Kuo Min Tang furthered the growth of both to a large extent. It was a powerful incentive for the development of the revolution. With that step, the Communists came out of their illegal existence; they found contact with the political life of the country; and the masses were brought under the banner of the Kuo M in Tang mainly through the activity of the Communists.

In the beginning, the Communists were opposed to entering the Kuo Min Tang. Under the leadership of Chen Tu-hsiu, it declared that the Kuo Min Tang was the party of the bourgeoisie, in which there was no place for the exploited masses. In the discussion on this question, the role of the Communist Party, under the given conditions, was cleared defined. It had to be the vanguard of the struggle for national liberation. That task could be accomplished only when the Communists stood in close contact with all the forces of National Revolution. But these could not be all organised in the Communist Party. The Kuo Min Tang was the common platform for all. Therefore, the entry of the Communists into the Kuo Min Tang was a necessary step. As long as the bourgeoisie were engaged in the struggle against foreign Imperialism, they must be supported with all means, because it was often evident that, left to themselves, they would not go very far. Only under the pressure of the masses could the nationalist bourgeoisie be driven to a struggle against Imperialism. For this purpose, it was necessary that the masses must enter the Kuo Min Tang. Should the masses do so, then the Communists as their leaders could not remain outside the Kuo Min Tang. They must be, there where the masses were. If the Communists called upon the masses to join the Kuo Min Tang, but themselves

remained out, then the masses would be exposed to the influence of the bourgeoisie. As the struggle against foreign domination was the burning issue of the day, the masses would certainly flock under the banner of the Kuo Min Tang as soon as it adopted a democratic programme of national liberation. The Communists would be isolated from the masses if they stayed away from the Kuo Min Tang.

The ultimate object of the Communist Party in any country is the realisation of Socialism. This object is attained upon the process of social evolution having passed through the various preparatory stages. For many reasons, the pre-conditions for Socialism were not yet created in China. Imperialist domination was the most important immediate reason. Therefore, the overthrow of Imperialism was the first condition for the realisation of the ultimate goal of the Communist Party. That being the case, the Communist Party could endorsed the programme of the Kuo Min Tang without in least deviating from the path to its own ultimate goal. The realisation of the programme of the Kuo Min Tang, indeed, would be a step forward towards the ultimate goal of the Communist Party.

The Communist Party entered the Kuo Min Tang on two conditions: that it was entitled to maintain its own independent organisation; and that it had the freedom to propagate its own views and, when necessary, criticise the Kuo Min Tang.

It endorsed the programme of the Kuo Min Tang and pledged itself to work for its realisation, without the latter undertaking any corresponding responsibility. The programme adopted by the Kuo Min Tang, when the Communists entered it, was the programme of the National Democratic Revolution; at the moment, it could be the minimum programme of the Communist Party. But it was not yet the radical programme of revolutionary democracy. It was only a tendency in that direction, and accommodated the feudal-patriarchal social outlook which was incompatible with the fundamental principles of the bourgeois democratic revolution. Nevertheless, the declaration to conduct the struggle against Imperialism and to support the minimum demands of the toiling masses was regarded by the Communists as an acceptable point of departure. Working in the ranks of the Kuo Min Tang, the Communists could try to convert this party into a national-revolutionary party with a clear democratic programme.

The Old Guard of the Kuo Min Tang was composed of the

literati of the classical Confucian School, higher officials, landlords and representatives of the trading bourgeoisie (Compradores), closely associated with Imperialism. They opposed the inclusion of the Communists in the Kuo Min Tang and, failing to prevent it, left the party. So the first result of the Communists' entering the Kuo Min Tang was that the latter was driven to the left. The process of class differentiation inside its ranks was expedited, since the masses, mobilised under its banner in course of the struggle against Imperialism, became more and more class conscious.

After three years' co-operation, the Kuo Min Tang not only expelled the Communists, but attacked them with unparalled brutality, on the pretext that they had conspired for the overthrow of the National Government. Nothing was farther from the truth. In the preceding chapter, it has been described why the Kuo Min Tang turned against the Communists. Now it will be shown that the Communist Party and the revolution could suffer such a defeat because the Communists, since their entry into the Kuo Min Tang, made a whole series of political and organisational mistakes which seriously weakened their position. The sudden callapse of the Chinese Revolution, after a period of stormy upheaval, confronted the world with a puzzle. The Communist Party of China had grown in the midst of a powerful revolutionary struggle; it was composed of the best revolutionaries of the country, representatives of the millions of organised workers and peasants. It was very difficult to understand how that party could all of a sudden suffer such a catastrophic defeat.

Imperialist intervention, the treachery of the bourgeoisie, the barbarism of feudal-militarist reaction, the betrayal of the petit-bourgeois leaders—all these contributed to the defeat. But yet another factor was responsible for it. That was inexperience on the part of the young Communist Party which vacillated between opportunist timidity and romantic heroism. It was to be expected that the leadership of the National Democratic Revolution would, in course of time, pass on to the working class. A survey of the situation in the light of history should have made the character and perspective of the Chinese Revolution sufficiently clear. The Communist Party as the leader of the working class had to keep that perspective in view, and prepare itself accordingly. The entry into the Kuo Min Tang was a step in the right direction. The original negative attitude of the Communist leaders was an ultra-leftist stupidity. Had not that mis-

take been corrected under the guidance of the Communist International, then, the Communist Party of China would have remained a small sect, isolated from the political life of the country. After the entry into the Kuo Min Tang, the Communist leaders swung to the other extreme. They forgot the object of the policy. That was opportunism. Of course, the Communist Party maintained its own organisation which developed numerically by leaps and bounds. Its political influence also spread like wild-fire because the Communists were the most active factor of the movement, and in each battle placed themselves in the foremost ranks, and surpassed all others in heroism and sacrifices. But in field of organisation, which is of the greatest importance in the midst of a fight, the Communists failed to prepare themselves for the crisis which was sure to come. In the critical days of the spring of 1927, when the Kuo Min Tang betrayed the revolution step by step, the Communist leaders made fateful errors for the anxiety to maintain the united front. The end was sacrificed for the means. Then again, when they were driven to the wall, the Communists swung back to other extreme. They went over to the offensive when defence for saving a defeated army would be the right tactics.

If the years 1924 and 1925 everything went well. The first was the year of preparation. The next was a year of powerful development of mass movement. Both the parties, the Kuo Min Tang and the Communists, worked together: there was a certain measure of harmony. Both were in the period of growth. They supplemented each other. Towards the end of 1925, the relation between the two began to experience difficulties. The social composition of the movement, developing under the banner of the Kuo Min Tang, and the logic of revolutionary development, gave the Communists a position which did not please the bourgeois leaders of the Kuo Min Tang. The Communists were the recognised leaders of the masses, formally organised under the banner of the Kuo Min Tang. The striving of the bourgeoisie to drive the Communists out of their positions of vantage, to free the nationalist movement from the domination of the revolutionary working class, reached its climax in the *coup d'etat* of March 20, 1926. It made a breach in the national united front. In the period of reaction, from the *coup d'etat* of March 20, up to the beginning of the North Expedition, the Communists were so very anxious for the maintenance of the united front, already broken by

the bourgeoisie, that they neglected their main task. It was to reinforce their position. The secret of the strength of the Communists was not the tolerance of the bourgeoisie, but the confidence of the masses. They could gain still more confidence of the masses if they conducted further, uncompromisingly, the struggle for defending the immediate interests of the masses, if they fought relentlessly the class struggle already declared by the bourgeoisie.

The national united front was still a necessity. The revolutionary role of the Kuo M in Tang was not yet played out completely. But there were more than two parties in the game. Between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat stood the middle-classes which, in a backward country like China, are of great importance, numerically as well as politically. In the first place, there was the peasantry. Whoever had the support of the peasantry could dominate the political situation in China. The bourgeoisie attacked the Communists precisely because they commanded the confidence of the peasantry. The Communist counter-offensive, therefore, should have been to champion the demands of the peasantry still more energetically. Then, there was the numerous class of urban petit-bourgeoisie which was also politically oppressed and economically exploited, and, therefore, could go still far in the fight for democratic freedom. When the bourgeoisie were threatening to break the united front, evidently to prevent the working class from occupying a strong position, the united front could not, and should not, be saved by giving in to their counter-revolutionary demands. In that critical moment, the correct tactics would be to unite the revolutionary oppressed classes more firmly together with the object of isolating the big bourgeoisie. The urban petit-bourgeois masses could be drawn closer to the working class by explaining it to them that the attack upon the Communists was sure to weaken the National Revolution.

But the Communists failed to differentiate the big bourgeoisie from the very numerous oppressed middle-classes. Instead of adopting an aggressive policy with the object of detaching the oppressed middle-classes from the big bourgeoisie, the Communists made great concessions to this counter-revolutionary class. The economic demands of the peasantry were practically given up, on the ground that the development of class struggle in the countryside would alienate the sympathy of the landowning classes for the Kuo Min Tang. On entering the Kuo Min Tang, the Communists bad reserved

the right of criticism; that right also was waived, so that the feudal-bourgeois leaders, conspiring against the revolution, might not be irritated. By speaking out fearlessly that the anti-Communist activities of the feudal-bourgeois leaders amounted to a betrayal of the National Democratic Revolution, the middle classes could be brought closer to the proletariat. In brief, over-estimation of the importance of the big bourgeoisie necessarily led to an under-estimation of the necessity of retaining the middle-classes in the national united form; the result of that mistake was that, in the critical moment, the middle-classes followed the bourgeoisie to the camp of counter-revolution—in Shanghai in March 1927, and later in Wuhan. The proletariat was isolated.

Other mistakes were made during the North Expedition. The Communists did not realise that the feudal-bourgeois wing of the Kuo Min Tang had undertaken the military campaign with the object of strengthening its own position, in order to prepare for the decisive struggle against the rising forces of an urgently required social revolution. It was quite correct for the Communists to support the North Expedition and to mobilise the masses for guaranteeing its success: because that was a means for spreading the revolution. But it should have been foreseen that, upon the success of the military campaign, the revolution would find itself in a crisis. The class struggle was bound to be sharpened. The feudal-bourgeois elements would not hesitate to destroy the united front and turn against the masses. Preparations should have been made for the decisive revolutionary action necessary in that inevitable crisis.[1]

During the military compaign, large masses of people were set in movement. Hundreds of thousands of workers and millions of peasants were organised. The more advanced section of the working class and revolutionary intellectuals swelled the ranks of the Communist Party which became the political organ of the masses. In the remotest villages of Hunan, Kiangsi and Hupeh, pictures of Karl Marx and Lenin shared the place of honour with that of Sun Yat-sen. The revolutionary wave rose to an alarming height. But the policy of the Communist leaders was "to broaden the revolution, not to deepen it." They maintained that, if the latter course were taken, the national united front would break.

The Propaganda Department of the Nationalist Army was largely manned by Communists. They refrained from carrying on

revolutionary agitation among the soldiers. The propaganda was conducted exclusively on orthodox Kuo Min Tang lines: Denouncement of Imperialism as the source of all the evils in China, and condemnation of the militarists as agents of foreign Imperialism. The propaganda did not appeal to the ignorant masses, whose revolt was, indeed, not directly against Imperialism; they hardly knew what that strange animal exactly was. The masses rebelled in the first place against their mediaeval oppressors, against landlords, usurers, the local officials and the rest of the host of parasites. They would not care to fight for driving the old militarists away so that the nationalist Generals might take their place. They helped the nationalists to drive the militarists away, because they believed that the appearance of the nationalist army heralded the end of all the evils—high taxes, illegal exactions, forced labour, oppression by the landlords and expropriation by the usurers. Indeed, the backward masses can hardly conceive of any national interest unless it is identified with their immediate social and economic well-being.

The failure of the Communists to arm the masses and to organise them militarily was a fatal mistake which contributed very largely to their defeat. The Nationalist Army enlarged itself in course of the North Expedition not by the influx of revolutionary workers and peasants; mercenary troops from the enemy's camp came over. The armies commanded by reactionary feudal Generals grew in number during the campaign, but the only division with a Communist command was hardly a man stronger when it arrived at Woochang on the Yangtse. There were various ways for arming the masses if the Communists wanted to do that. For the North Expedition, the Nationalist Army received large supplies of arms and ammunitions from the U.S.S.R. A part of that supply could be reserved for arming the masses. A considerable amount of arms could be taken away from the soldiers of the defeated armies. A good harvest could be derived by disarming the irregular armies maintained by the rural ruling class. Then, there are many other ways of getting arms, known to those who are determined to do so. When, in the next year, the Communists went over to armed uprising, the situation was much more unfavourable. Nevertheless, guerilla hands could be supplied with arms. Finally, revolutionary agitation among the soldiers of the Nationalist Army, with slogans representing the immediate demands of the peasantry from which all the soldiers were recruited, would

have completely changed the character of the army. Such an agitation would have eventually succeeded in detaching the soldiers, with a considerable section of the lower officers, from the reactionary commanders. In this way, the reactionary feudal-bourgeois bloc could have been possibly disarmed, seriously weakened at any rate, before it turned against the revolution.

In consequence of the North Expedition, the Kuo Min Tang itself was thrown into a severe internal crisis. The process of class differentiation in its ranks became sharp. A split of the Kuo Min Tang along the line of class differentiation would have met the requirements of the situation. Such a split would have reinforced the revolution. It would not have destroyed the united front. On the contrary, freed from the elements of discord, the ranks of the revolution would have been consolidated. The expulsion of feudal-bourgeois elements would have ended to a large extent the antagonisms and conflicts inside the nationalist ranks. In consequence, these would have become a united fighting coalition of the oppressed and exploited masses.

The class contradictions among the different component groups of the Kuo Min Tang were confused by personal jealousies and group interests. The Chinese bourgeoisie are not a homogeneous class. Compradores, bankers, industrialists and traders have conflicting interests. The situation was further confused by the presence of feudal militarists who controlled the decisive organ of power. Under these conditions, the feudal-bourgeois wing of the Kuo Min Tang adopted no uniform tactics when it turned against the revolution. Some were for open offensive on the pretext of combating the "Communist Menace". Others preferred to remain inside the revolutionary ranks with the object of sabotaging their actions. Thus, the revolution was threatened from two sides: Frontal attack of feudal-bourgeois reaction^ and intrigues of the traitors inside its own ranks. In order to guarantee the future of the revolution, the traitors must be exposed and expelled. That was an essential condition for a decisive struggle against the enemy who had already thrown down the mask. In other words, to split the Kuo Min Tang along the line of the contradiction between the interests of the masses of its members and those of the feudal-bourgeois leading clique, was the task of the moment. That was the task of the Communist Party. A mechanical conception of united front politics, wrong estimation of the roles of the different classes,

prevented the Communist Party from rising up to its task.

It acted as the heroic vanguard of the revolution when, to help the advance of the Nationalist Army, the Communist Party led the Shanghai proletariat in the uprising. But at the same time, it should have anticipated what the leaders of the Nationalist Army, and the class represented by them, were aiming at. They had already shown their hand. Yet, owing to their false idea about united front, the Communists failed to expose the designs of Chiang Kai-shek. They did not explain it to the working class and the petit-bourgeois masses that he wanted to occupy Shanghai with the object of using it as the base of future counter-revolutionary operations. On the contrary, the Communists organised a great mass demonstration to "welcome the leader of the victorious Nationalist Army", even when he was already preparing for the massacre of the working class. The fear of a break with the bourgeoisie, conspiring openly against the revolution, hindered the Communists to win over the democratic middle-classes. The proletariat was isolated just when the blow fell, because the democratic masses did not understand that the militarist attack on the working class was a death-blow to the National Revolution.

Shanghai was an extraordinarily difficult and dangerous place for the Communists. As the greatest industrial centre of the country, it was naturally the stronghold of the Communist Party. But the enemy was also very strong there. It is not altogether excluded that the counter revolution would have triumphed in Shanghai even if the Communists had adopted a correct tactical line. But even in that case, the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat could possibly have been saved from destruction. Forces could have been spared until the situation was favourable.

The situation was altogether different in Wuhan where the Communists occupied a very advantageous position. There, circumstances from the very beginning were favourable for the adoption of offensive tactics with the object of transforming the Kuo Min Tang into a coalition of the oppressed and exploited classes, and the Nationalist Government into an organ of revolutionary democracy. Instead of working with that perspective, the Communists regarded the entire Wuhan Group as the left wing of the Kuo Min Tang. They overlooked the fact that, in social composition, that group differed very little from the rival group. The Wuhan Group was supported by the revolutionary democratic masses; but it was also dominated by

a clique of feudal-bourgeois politicians. In Wuhan, nevertheless, the situation was very favourable for the development of the revolution along the line of class antagonism between the feudal-bourgeois leaders and the democratic participants of the nationalist movement. But the false idea of united front still prevailed. The Communist leaders maintained that the struggle against the right wing could serve as the common platform. That was right. But one should have also realised that the agents of the right wing in the inner circles of Wuhan were still more dangerous than Chiang Kai-shek. The Communist leaders did not realise that. They allowed class antagonisms to be confused by the squabble between the two rival groups of feudal-bourgeois reactionaries. That fateful mistake on the part of the Communists enabled the latter to attack the revolution from both sides and ultimately transform the entire Kuo Min Tang into an instrument of counter-revolution. Strictly speaking, the reactionaries first destroyed the Kuo Min Tang and then began the murderous attack upon the National Democratic Revolution under the flag of the Kuo Min Tang. Since its reorganisation, the Kuo Min Tang had been the instrument for unifying the masses. Side by side with the large mass of the oppressed middle-classes (petit-bourgeois intellectuals, students, employees, artisans, small traders, etc.), the Kuo Min Tang embraced millions of organised workers and peasants. Its destruction by the conspiracy and treachery of its feudal-bourgeois leaders was a staggering blow for the revolution. The Communists could not hinder the tragic destruction of that powerful force of democratic revolution even when the conditions were so very favourable for its consolidation.

The characteristic feature of the Wuhan period was the dominating position of the working class. Yet, the Communist Party played second fiddle to the Kuo Min Tang. The predominating influence of the toiling masses compelled the Kuo Min Tang to invite the Communists to take part in the Government. The acceptance of that invitation by the Communists was the subject of a heated discussion. It was, however, a correct policy for the Communists to enter the Wuhan Government. With the control of the Ministry of Agriculture (which included the Ministry of Home Affairs—police, local self-government, etc.), and of the Labour Ministry, the Communists could bring the pressure of the organised masses to bear upon the Nationalist Government ever more effectively. Through the former

the organisation of village self-government could be promoted. That possibility alone gave the Communists considerable political power.

The Wuhan Government was not a coalition government in the usual sense- It was a new creation of the revolution. There was no existing State apparatus; it was still to be created. On the contrary, there was a powerful mass movement which could influence the policy of the Government In such a situation, the participation of the Communists, that is, of the leaders of the revolutionary working class in a newly created Government meant opening up of new channels for exerting mass influence. But the Communists made little use of the great possibilities According to the general policy of the party of unconditionally obeying the orders of the Kuo Min Tang, the Communist Ministers held that they should do nothing except in agreement with all the other members of the Government.

On assuming office, the Communist Minister of Agriculture, Tan Ping-san, outlined a programme of Agrarian Reform, which accorded more with the principles of the Kuo Min Tang than those of the Communist Party. Two weeks later, on June 15th, the leader of the party, Chen Tu-hsiu, endorsed the attitude of Tan Ping-san in a telegram addressed to the Executive Committee of the Communist International. "Tan Ping-san's inauguration speech is ambiguous. It was delivered immediately after the revolt of Hsia Tao-yin. The Kuo Min Tang had resolved to postpone the solution of the agrarian question and to put down Hsia Tao-yin. As a member of the Government, Tan Ping-san openly could not defend any other point of view". A few days later, with the sanction of the political Bureau of the Central Committee of his party, Tan Ping-san accepted the charge, given to him by the Nationalist Government, to go to Hunan as the head of a commission "to check the excesses of the peasant movement"; that is to say, to combat the forces of the agrarian revolution.

Having regard for the entire history of the Communist Party of China, it cannot be maintained that its leaders fell into this dangerous opportunism only after participation in the Government. In office, the Communists simply continued the policy—of towing the lines of the Kuo Min Tang -which they had followed previously. The participation in the Government should have only been the means for creating a solid revolutionary bloc of the democratic masses with the object of isolating the feudal-bourgeois leaders of the Wuhan Group, and then to drive them away. Unfortunately, the Communists

were not equal to the task of the moment they failed to accomplish it either inside or outside the Government. Preoccupied with a wrong idea of united front, they insisted upon supporting the entire Wuhan Group, and thereby failed to act according to the requirements of moment.

The attitude towards the so-called Second North Expedition, the advance of the Wuhan Army towards Peking, was a typical expression of that policy. The Communist Party was directed to mobilise the masses in support of the plan made by the ruling clique of the Kuo Min Tang. The danger inherent in the plan was so very great that not a few Communist leaders, in the beginning, expressed misgivings. Nevertheless, the Central Executive of the Communist Party endorsed the plan, because it was a definite decision of the Kuo Min Tang. That was in the beginning of April. At that time, the Wuhan Govern.nent could be forced to give up the dangerous plan, if the Communists had opposed it on the ground that it would endanger the territorial as well as the social basis of the revolution. The Wuhan Government would not dare take such a serious step without being sure of mass support; and the masses were under Communist leadership. But the Communists themselves shared the opinion of the Kuo Min Tang leaders about the development of the revolution. During the controversy over the plan of sending a military expedition for occupying Peking, Chen Tu-hsiu expounded the theory that the "broadening" of the revolution should precede its "deepening"; that is to say, territorial expansion was the task of the moment. The solution of the social problems of the revolution should be put off until after the accomplishment of that task. This theory was only a logical consequence of Sun Yat-sen's plan, which mechanically divided the revolution into three stages: Unity, Trusteeship and Democracy. The theory entertains the idea that the union of China under one modern State is possible before the annihilation of the social forces of decomposition, that a capitalist State could be established without accomplishing the fundamental tasks of the bourgeois revolution. Victims of an opportunist conception of class alliance, the Communists shirked the responsibility of combating the reactionary ideology of petit-bourgeois nationalism.

The argument in favour of supporting the military advance towards the North was that thereby the Nationalist Army would be still more enlarged. It was further argued that the National Revolu-

tion must secure the alliance with the left militarists; that the union with the forces of Feng Yu-hsiang and Yen Hsi-shan must be realised. There still remained the remnants of the army of Wu Pei-fu scattered all over the province of Hupeh. They must also be incorporated in the Nationalist Army. The Russian Chief Adviser of the Nationalist Government, Borodin, defended the plan, although he himself admitted that the immediate outcome of the projected expedition would be the union of all the military elements under the flag of the Nationalist Government. Such a union could be desired only by those who were consciously conspiring against the revolution. For the Communists, it should have been clear that mercenary troops, commanded by professional militarists, who until the day before had been in the enemy's camp, could not be won over, really to be transformed into a revolutionary weapon.

In the spring of 1927, it was no longer necessary to discuss this question theoretically. One should have already learnt from bitter experience. The expedition from Kwangtung to the Yangtse had brought so many "left militarists" into the camp of the Nationalist Government that the relation of forces in its ranks was dangerously disturbed. The revolution itself was seriously threatened by the newly acquired military allies who ostentatiously swore allegiance to it. The influence of the counter-revolutionary feudal militarists had reinforced the position of the bourgeoisie, who had been nearly driven from the leadership of the nationalist movement by the awakening of the masses. It was clear that the continuation of this process would endanger the future of the revolution. Nevertheless, the Communists supported the plan of military expansion.

The anxiety to avoid the social tasks of the revolution was intimately connected with the desire for its territorial expansion. By supporting the plan of military advance towards the North, the Communist leaders endorsed the politics of the ruling clique of the Kuo Min Tang as regards the burning question of Agrarian Revolution. They repeated the old argument: During military operations against the enemy, it is not advisable to sharpen the class struggle in the rear. The officers of the Nationalist Army were mostly landlords; confiscation of land, therefore, could not be carried through without provoking their displeasure. It was a veritable vicious circle. The adhesion of "left" militarists bound the hands of the Kuo Min Tang. Should the development of the revolution be made conditional

upon the winning over of more such elements, then, the chains would only be strengthened. If the process went a few steps farther, then, it was all over with the revolution.[2]

Sun Yat-sen's idea of military expansion is inseparably connected with his dictum that class struggle must be prevented. The peasants should not take the land. They should wait patiently until a benevolent Government found it possible to give it to them without taking it away from the landlords. Having failed to criticise Sun Yat-sen's theories, the Communists found their hands bound by his dogmas. In course of time, they were placed in a very uncomfortable situation. They were compelled to advocate postponement of class struggle in cities as well as in villages, so that the rear of the army advancing northwards might not be endangered. They were haunted by the nightmare of a break with the Kuo Min Tang. They did not see that the feudal-bourgeois clique was destroying the Kuo Min Tang and that this could be saved only by overthrowing its counter-revolutionary leaders. In that critical moment, the Communists could have reinforced their relation with the Kuo Min Tang, that is to say, with the revolutionary democratic masses, only in one way - by declaring war against the ruling clique. They failed to do so and, consequently, strengthened the position of the enemies of the revolution inside the Wuhan Group.

But class struggle could not be suspended. It had broken out furiously throughout the country. The exploiting class was everywhere on the offensive. The peasants began to confiscate land only when enraged reaction threatened the very existence of their revolutionary organisations.

Some of the leading figures of the Communist Party simply did not see the chances for revolutionary action. They mostly came from the petit-bourgeois intelligentsia and were closely connected with the Kuo Min Tang politicians. They made serious mistakes. But only the leaders were responsible for the mistakes. The ordinary members of the Communist Party stood by the masses and acted according to their revolutionary will. They were not disturbed by the phantom of a break with the Kuo Min Tang. They were organically connected with the revolutionary masses. They could not be excluded from the Kuo Min Tang so long as it really existed. Thus mistakes on the part of the leaders, almost amounting to a betrayal of the working class, could not remove the "Communist Menace". But there was a great

confusion and demoralisation, which always happens whenever a powerful mass movement is continually curbed by its own leaders. That afforded counter-revolution the opportunity to strike. The first blow fell on the Communists. A few facts will give some idea of the confusion which was created by the series of mistakes committed by the Communist leaders.

The Nationalist Government did nothing against the counterrevolutionary uprising at Changsha. The newly established Provincial Administration there began the suppression of the peasant movement with the tacit support of the Nationalist Government Almost all the Communist leaders believed the stories about the "excesses" of the peasants and declared that the most effective method of combating counter revolution would be to check them. The Communist Minister of Agriculture, Tan Ping-san, was ready to go to Hunan with that object.[3] But on the spot things appeared differently. There the Communists, together with the members of the Kuo Min Tang, prepared for an armed attack upon the insurgents. More than twenty-thousand peasants marched upon Changsha from all sides. Nearly at the gates of the city, they were ordered to go back and dissolve their militar[r]y formations. The instruction came from the Communist headquarters at Wuhan.[4] In the mean time, the Commander-in-Chief of the Wuhan Army, Tang Shen-chi, had declared that he was personally going to Changsha, in order to establish order there. The counter-revolutionary insurgents there were his subordinates. The Communist leaders allowed themselves to be deceived by the unmistakably dishonest manoeuvre; they decided to call off the armed uprising, since Tang Shen-chi had taken the matter in his own hand. A sudden, unwarranted, retreat is extremely demoralising even for a regular army it is more so for an improvised force. The mobilised peasants retreated in a chaotic manner. The counter-revolutionary insurgents availed themselves of the opportunity. They attacked the retreating peasants and massacred them ruthlessly. That, naturally, created a deep demoralisation throughout the entire peasant movement.

The massacre of the peasants caused a great commotion among the workers in Wuhan. From all sides, retaliatory measures were demanded.[6] It was proposed in the Central Committee of the Communist Party that the workers in the Hanyang Arsenal should be called upon to declare a strike to protest against the massacre of

peasants in Hunan, and that the strike in the arsenal should be extended to a general strike if the demand for retaliatory action was not accepted by the Nationalist Government. The demands were: Removal of the counter-revolutionary administration at Changsha; and an appeal to the peasant masses of the province to undertake this task if the Nationalist Government could not dispose of sufficient troops necessary for the purpose. The far-reaching implication of the proposed measures terrified the Communist leaders. If the demands for retaliatory action were seriously pressed, that would be a step for the overthrow of the Nationalist Government which had proved itself to be a willing tool in the hands of the counter-revolutionary militarists. The situation was such that only a bold step like that could lead to the salvation of the revolution.

Tang Shen-chi ambition had been thwarted by the failure of the advance towards Peking; he was on the point of taking his army back to Wuhan. If the situation could be radically changed when the greater part of the counter-revolutionary army was still far away, then, the revolution might be saved. A general strike, occupation of the arsenal, arming of the workers, establishment of a revolutionary democratic government, sanctioning the expropriation of land by the peasants—those were the steps to be taken for developing the revolution. Such a development would naturally have repercussions on the Nationalist Army. Its movements could be hampered by inciting the soldiers to mutiny against the officers. But the Communist leaders would not travel that way. They were still afraid of the break with the Kuo Min Tang. They still stuck to the argument that a strike in the arsenal would be a stab in the back of the Nationalist Army and a rebellion against the Government, and such a rebellion would make any relation with the Kuo Min Tang untenable. After a heated discussion for days, the Central Committee rejected the proposal.

The atmosphere was heavily laden. Suddenly, the Communist Party called a demonstration for welcoming the nationalist leaders returning from the front. That worked like a cold douche. Pessimism, defeatism, demoralisation, and even disgust, spread far and wide. The situation was so ripe for the counter-revolutionary offensive that no serious resistance of the masses need be feared. In the last days of June, events moved fast at Wuhan. Workers were completely disarmed; trade-unions were dissolved; meetings and demonstrations were forbidden; and the entire city was in a state of siege. On July 3,

the Communist Party performed its last tragic act in an atmosphere of triumphant counter-revolution. An extraordinary meeting of the Central Committee adopted the so-called "programme of retreat", which practically nullified all the resolutions of the Fifth Congress of the party held only two months ago.[6]

But the counter-revolution was implacable. It thirsted for blood. So long as the mass movement was not completely suppressed, the Communist Party was not fully crushed, the situation was not safe. The Communists were driven out of all positions; hundreds were arrested, many executed. Finally, there was an end to the relation with the Kuo Min Tang, for the sake of maintaining which the Communist leaders had committed mistake after mistake, one more fatal than the other. The Communists were driven out of the Kuo Min Tang.

To conduct the offensive against the revolution without any possible resistance, the Iron Army was sent away from Wuhan with the order to march down the Yangtse, otensibly to begin operations against Nanking. In the beginning of August, it occupied Nancbang. At that moment, the Communist Party decided to go over to the offensive. The open counter-revolutionary action of the Kuo Min Tang leaders could no longer be tolerated on any pretext. One detachment of the Iron Army under Communist command raised the banner of revolt against the counter-revolutionary Government of Wuhan. The insurgents occupied Nanchang where a Revolutionary Committee was set up as the provisional government. Simultaneously, the Central Committee of the Communist Party issued the declaration that, having broken away from the toiling masses, the Kuo Min Tang had become an organ of counter-revolution. It was further declared that opposition to the agrarian revolution meant betrayal of the struggle against Feudalism, without the destruction of which it was impossible to overthrow Imperialism. The Communist Party proclaimed its determination to carry on the fight against Imperialism, Militarism and Feudalism, in close cooperation with the masses of the Kuo Min Tang membership. It also proclaimed that only through such a cooperation would it be possible to prevent the betrayal of the revolution by the Generals and vacillating politicians who were taking shelter behind the banner of Sun Yat-sen.

It was all too late. But even then, the Communists did not realise that the banner of Sun Yat-sen was the banner of counter-

revolution. Even if they were of that opinion, they did not consider it to be tactically advisable to speak it out. That was a new mistake. The illusion about Sun Yat-senism kept the democratic middle class under the influence of the feudal-bourgeois wing oftheKuoMin Tang. That illusion had to be dispelled. No revolutionary practice was possible within the limitations of a reactionary ideology.

However, the offensive began much too late. The counterrevolution had already occupied all important positions. The mass movement had been demoralised by fierce terror. Any protest strike could be broken very easily. The power of resistance of the working class had sunk very low. They had been very heavily bled, even before the desperate struggle for the defence of the revolution was taken up. In the middle of August, the insurgents had to evacuate Nanchang. They marched southwards, in order to recover Kwang-tung. They heroically fought their way through the province of Kwangsi infested with counter-revolutionary troops. But the fact that their number did not increase showed that the peasant masses were reluctant to join them actively. They found strong sympathy on the way; otherwise, they could not have possibly held their own against overwhelming odds. But it was a passive sympathy. The peasants were no longer ready for an armed uprising. A year's bloody suppression had terrorised and demoralised them. The Communists fought with admirable bravery, great spirit of sacrifice and revolutionary idealism. But the political effect of those acts should not be overestimated.

In the middle of September, the revolutionary army penetrated the eastern parts of the province of Kwangtung, which were the centres of a strong peasant movement. They captured the important port of Swatow where a Revolutionary Committee was set up. Its first act was to declare war against the counter-revolutionary Governments of Wuhan and Nanking: its programme was reconquest of the province of Kwangtung and the organisation there of a base of the revolution. The Revolutionary Committee declared in favour of the confiscation of land by the peasants. Soon imperialist battleships appeared on the scene for "saving the life and property of foreigner", but, in reality, to cut off any possible supply of the urgently needed provisions for the revolutionary army. On the land, troops were sent from Canton. Thus, threatened from two sides, the revolutionary army aoandoned Swatow in the beginning of October. In the eastern

neighbourhood of Canton, there was a peasant uprising: it was suppressed with gruesome barbarity. More than a thousand rebellious peasants were massacred.

In the beginning of December, the rear-guard offensive reached the climax. On the 10th Canton became the scene of an uprising which led to the establishment of a Workers' and Peasants' Government. The insurgents held the city for three days. With the help of foreign Powers, the insurrection was drowned in blood. Foreign battleships on the river served as cover for the counter-revolutionary army. An entire part of the city was demolished by bombardment with artillary operating from behind the foreign battleships. Nobody knows how many were the casualties of the open fight: after the re-occupation of the city, more than two thousand people were immediately executed by the counter-revolutionaries.

In November 1927, even after the revolutionary forces had been dislodged from Swatow, the Central Committee of the Communist Party, then situated at Shanghai, issued an incredible instruction to the Kwangtung provincial organisation. The instruction ran: "The worker-peasant masses of Kwangtung have only one way out, that is to utilise the opportunity of the civil war. ... in order resolutely to expand the uprisings in the cities and villages .... to agitate among the soldiers, to stage mutinies and revolts, and in the time of war swiftly to link such uprisings into a general uprising for the establishment of the rule of the Workers', Peasants' and Soldiers' 'Delegates' Councils (Soviets)."[7] Acting on that instruction, on November 26, the Communists at Canton decided to have the insurrection on December 10. Apart from the fundamental mistake of the policy of an offensive on the whole front immediately after a crushing defeat, the Canton uprising was based on such palpably wrong calculations that its failure was predetermined.

According to the report of the Communist Military Commander, Yeh Ting, only 4,200 persons participated in the insurrection. The only military force, on which the insurrection could count was the Cadet Regiment of 1,200 men, a good many of whom were Communists. As against this, again Yeh Ting reports, the Government had more that 7,000 well armed men available in the city itself. In addition, there were armed forces of about 50,000 men either

on the outskirts of the city or within easy striking distance. Generally, Yeh Ting reports: "The masses took no part in the insurrection. All shops were closed, and the employees showed no desire to support us. Most of the soldiers we disarmed dispersed in the city. The insurrection was not linked to the difficulties of the railway workers. The reactionaries could still use the Canton-Hankow link. The workers of the power-plant cut off the light, and we had to work in the dark. The workers of Canton and Hongkong as well as the sailors did not dare join the combatants. The river sailors placed themselves shamefully at the service of the Whites. The railway workers of the Hongkong and Canton-Hankow line transmitted the telegrams of tlie enemy and transported their soldiers. The peasants did not help us by destroying the tracts, and did not try to prevent the enemy from attacking Canton. The workers of Hongkong did not display the least sympathy for the insurrection".[8]

The German Communist, Heinz Neumann, acted as the representative of the Communist International on the spot. He was the most enthusiastic advocate of the idea of insurrection. He was its prime mover. In his report to the Communist International, he disputes details of Yeh Ting's report, but admits that the latter was correct on the whole. Neumann's defence was: "But if one considers that the troops of the bourgeoisie were surrounded on all sides by revolutionary ferment, and that the commanding staff could not rely on them politically, one can say that the military forces in Canton were equal." But later on, in the same report, he admitted: "The great majority of the proletariat and the petit-bourgeoisie did not give sufficient support to the new power. The railway workers, the municipal workers, the sailors of Hongkong, and others did not stop work. The petit-bourgeoisie, for the most part, adopted a waiting attitude. At the moment of the insurrection, there was no important revolutionary movement among the peasants adjacent to Canton. The peasants were completely isolated; no aid could be expected from them." Yet, according to Neumann, "the Communist leaders were profoundly convinced that all the conditions for victory were present, and that success was assured."

Before long, even the most ardent believers in the sure success of the Chinese revolution began to realise that fatal mistakes had been committed. The head of the Red International of Labour Unions Lozowsky, for example, wrote: "It is true that there were sharp

struggles developing between Chang Fah-kwei and Li Chi-sen, but the insurrectionists should have known that, as soon as the banner of revolt was raised, the quarrels in the camp of the counter-revolution would immediately come to an end. . . . We had done no preparatory work to disintegrate the enemy troops. This predetermined the outcome of the insurrection".[9]

Immediately before the Nanchang uprising, Lominadze came to China as the new representative of the Communist International. The disastrous policy of leading the defeated and demoralised forces of revolution in the offensive all over the front was introduced under his direction. The responsibility of the Canton uprising directly belongs to him. Even he, though only a year later, admitted. "Obviously, we far too greatly exaggerated the extent of the development of the peasants' uprising at that time".[10]

Yet, "the Significance and Lessons of the Canton Uprising" was appraised by the Political Bureau of the Chinese Communist Party, on January 3, *[929,* as follows: "Only cowardly opportunists can call such an uprising a premature act, a putsch, a military conspiracy. Such opportunism did not exist in the Canton section of the Communist Party or among the members of the Central Committee. The Canton uprising in mid-December was an inevitable outgrowth of the development of the class struggle as a whole and the conjuncture of the objective conditions. The working class had no other outlet but to rise directly to capture the revolutionary power".[11] It should be mentioned that both Neumann and Lominadze were present in the meeting which expressed the above opinion. The resolution was most probably drafted by one of them!

After a month, the Canton insurrection came up for discussion in the Ninth Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International. In the resolution adopted warning was given against "putschist tendencies". Nevertheless, it was affirmed that the Canton insurrection was not a putsch. It was "the heroic attempt of the proletariat to organise Soviet Power", although it suffered from "several errors of leadership, absence of broad political strikes, and absence of an elected Soviet as the organ o.' the uprising".[12]

The Canton Commune came into being, indeed, in a rather extraordinary manner. Four days before the insurrection, fifteen men had been selected in a secret meeting of the Communist Party to constitute what was to become the "Canton Council of Workers',

Peasants' and Soldiers' Deputies". Nine of them represented trade-unions under Communist influence: three, the Cadets' Regiment; and other three, peasants. It is reported that the latter failed to appear in the Inaugural Session of the Commune. The Soviet was to be enlarged to a membership of 300 after the capture of power.[13]

Nearly a year afterwards, Lominadze wrote: "The greatest political mistake of many Chinese Communists was that for several months after the defeat of the Canton uprising, they thought that this uprising was the direct beginning of a new, higher, revolutionary wave all over China, and accordingly they were for the direct organisation of armed uprisings".[14] Lominadze was the representative of the Communist International in China when "the greatest political mistake" was committed, not by the Chinese Communists on their own initiative, but according to the directions of the Communist International. That mistaken policy was continued for several years, during which time resolutions endorsing and encouraging that mistake were repeatedly passed by the Executive Committee as well as the Sixth Congress of the Communist International.

The causes of the failure of the Canton uprising have been set forth above sufficiently in detail. Apart from the fundamental mistake of the much too belated offensive, undertaken only after a crushing defeat, the contributing cause was the amateurishness of the organisers who seem to have lacked all sense of responsibility. Even the most glaring facts of the situation were simply disregarded. "The armed forces of the ruling class stationed in Canton exceeded by five or six times the forces of the insurrectionists."[15] The indispensable step of calling a general strike as the prelude to the uprising was dismissed, "because it seemed to the Revolutionary Committee that, if they did not succeed in taking the enemy unawares by a sudden night attack, the chances of victory would singularly diminish".[16] So, it was unanimously decided to give the signal for the uprising without even attempting to call a general strike,[17] which is usually done to test the situation. The general strike was not attempted because from very recent experience the organisers of the insurrection knew that the workers would not respond. The last resistance of the Canton works had been broken down bloodily less than two months ago. Even later, the Workers' Volunteer Corps, which had played such an important role ever since the boycott of Hongkong in 1925-26, was disbanded and driven out of their barracks practically

without any resistance. But all those and many other highly significant events did not mean anything to the Communist leaders, all bent upon armed uprising. The following quotation from an ardent supporter of the policy of offensive on the whole front depicts the background on which the tragedy was staged. "The Communist Party was not capable of organising strikes. They could not stop the economic life of the whole city. They could not attract the proletarians in the factories and handicraft shops to the movement. Only when the roar of guns and rifles was heard and barricade fighting was already in progress, did the working masses begin to know that an insurrection was going on".[18]

The Canton uprising was the most tragic event in the entire history of the Chinese Revolution. It was the greatest mistake ever committed because its bloody suppression was inevitable It was a foolhardy, ill-conceived, dilettantly prepared offensive; it was a typical adventure. The Nanchang insurrection had its historical significance. It marked the break of the Communist Party from its fateful opportunistic past. But since the break took place much too late, it should not have been the starting point for an offensive on the whole front. The mistakes in the past could not be rectified by plunging headlong into a desperate offensive; the proper course for the moment was to beat a strategic retreat with the object of saving the defeated and demoralised forces and marshalling them for an eventual offensive in the next favourable opportunity. The impossibility of holding Nanchang, the fact that the peasants did not join the insurgents':* army during its long march through Kiangsi, the abortive occupation of Swatow—all these showed that the Communist slogans of "general armed uprising" and "Soviet Republic" did not find the necessary response from the masses. In those circumstances, it was a serious mistake to go in for an uprising in Canton under the banner of "Soviets". While admiring the heroism of the fallen insurgents of Canton, and honouring their memory, it must nevertheless be said that the mistake did incalculable harm to the revolution. It completed the defeated of the working class and placed it out of combat for a long time.

The new policy of the Communist Party, initiated since the Nanchang uprising, was based on the theory that, in consequence of the betrayal of the bourgeoisie, the National Revolution must develop directly to a proletarian Socialist revolution. Events proved that

the theory was wrong. The masses did not respond to the slogan of Soviets. In Canton itself, hardly ten thousand workers participated actively in the uprising and supported the Commune.[19] Yet the belated policy of an adventurous offensive was continued even after the severe defeat at Canton. Throughout the year 1928, local peasant uprisings were organised in Kwangtung, Kiangsi and Hunan. Thanks to the primitive means of transportation, and immense expenses of the country, those insurrections could not be easily suppressed by the counter-revolutionary troops. Nevertheless, they did not develop into a united mass movement; the insurgents functioned as isolated guerilla bands. Their operations were restricted to certain districts of Hunan, Kiangsi and Kwangtung.

Yet, that steril but very costly policy was formulated by the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International in July 1928, more than half a year after the tragedy of Canton. "At the present time, the party must everywhere propagate among the masses the idea of Soviets, and the inevitability of the coming revolutionary mass armed uprising. ... It must consistently and undeviatingly follow the line of seizure of State power, organisation of Soviets as organs of insurrection. . . . The future growth of the revolution will place before the party as an immediate political task the preparation for, and carrying through of, armed insurection as the sole path to the completion of the bourgeois democratic revolution, and to the overthrow of the power of the Kuo Min Tang".[1,0] If this policy was adopted a year earlier, the whole history of China might have been different. Indeed, the light had dawned as early as in August 1927, but even then only after criminal opportunism had permitted the most favourable opportunity for striking to pass by. After counterrevolution had completely triumphed, on August 9, 1927, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union declared the following in a resolution: "The national bourgeoisie is incapable of solving the inner problems of the revolution for the reason that it not only fails to support the peasantry, but actually combats them. . .. It is almost impossible for the bourgeoisie to enter into any compromise with the peasantry, since in China even the scantiest land reform would involve expropriation of the gentry and small landlords, an action of which the bourgeoisie is absolutely incapable. The Communist Party must declare that the victory over Imperialism, the revolutionary unification of China, and its emancipation from the

yoke of Imperialism, are only possible on the basis of the class struggle of the workers and peasants against the feudal lords and capitalists".

Even Borodin, the preceptor of the policy which killed the Chinese Revolution, is reported to have returned from the ruins, largely his own creation, a repentant sinner. On his way back to Moscow, only a few days after he had sacrificed the Chinese Revolution on the altar of an alliance with the "left" militarists, he was constrained to express the following opinion: "The big bourgeoisie can never unify China because they are not really against the ~ Imperialists; they are allied with them and profit by them. The small bourgeoisie cannot unify China because they vacillate between the workers and peasants, on the one hand, and the big bourgeoisie, on the other hand, and in the end, go over to the latter. The workers and peasants did not unify China because they trusted too much in the small bourgeoisie."[21] The wisdom, unfortunately, come too late. Borodin, of course, could no longer do anything to save the situation. The Communist International could. But its new direction to the Communist Party of China, as formulated by the Sixth World Congress, was reckless adventurism which led to the complete destruction of the forces of revolution, heavily defeated thanks to the earlier policy of opportunism. Upon the inauguration of the new policy, the deposed leader of the Communist Party of China, Chen Tu-hsiu, bitterly remarked that, having "learned in the past only how to capitulate", they were not given a chance to "understand that it was necessary to retreat" after such a disastrous defeat.[22]

Having imbibed the first form of opportunism during the formative period of their political life, the leaders of the Chinese Communist Party readily adopted the new policy, hailing it with the cry "Long live the victorious (?) Chinese Revolution!"[23], which they had callously killed only the year before. Forgetting the tragic experience of the Canton uprising, and disregarding the utter futility of the adventure carried on even after that, the Chinese delegate to the Sixth World Congress declared: "The Comintern brought forward resolutely the slogan of armed insurrection for the establishment of the Soviet Regime. This alone has enabled our party to consolidate our ranks, win new forces, rally hundreds of thousands, nay, millions of workers around its slogans."[24] The actual situation in China was, however, entirely different. In an adventurist offensive, the defeated forces

of the revolution had been completely destroyed; the Communist Party, in the middle of 1928, existed only in name. That was revealed in a circular of the Central Committee of the party issued on November 8, 1928, reviewing the political work of the party after the Sixth Congress. In that realistic document, one reads the following: "The trade-union organisations have shrunk to almost nothing. The party organisations in the cities are scattered and smashed. In the whole country, there is not one healthy nucleus of industrial workers." A party in such a state of prostration could not possibly shoulder the task of leading a revolution. Yet, a few months later, the Executive Committee of the Communist International issued the following instructions: "The party should destroy the power of all militarist factions, turn the militarist war into a civil war; prepare for the political general strike."[25] Some more facts will show that the Communist Party of China was not in a position to carry out these instructions.

Just when the Communist Party was calling for "political strikes", "general strikes" and "armed uprising", "the workers feared to have the Communists come to them, and implored them not to wreck their struggle". They used to say: "Your words are quite correct, but we cannot carry them out now. It will be a good thing for us if we can get our wages raised a little and not get fired"[26] These very significant facts were not unknown to the Communist International. They were stated in an official document more than a year before.. "In most of the cities, even in great working class centres, like Wuhan, Tientsin and Canton, no work has been done. In the big and important enterprises, there are no nuclei whatever."[27] Nevertheless, the policy of offensive continued. The warning came again, a few months later, this time from the leader of the Chinese party himself. "Even where our comrades participated, our influence and slogans bore no fruit. Local organisations do not exist in the important centres."[28] No heed was paid. Armed insurrection was still the thing. Nothing less than "Soviets" could save the revolution which, by that time, was dead like Queen Anne. In 1926, the National Labour Federation had a membership of nearly three millions. In 1930, it had fallen to 64,000. That also was an inflated figure, because the total membership in all the principal cities and industrial centres taken together did not come up to 6000.[29] A few months later, a leader of the Communist Party revealed: "Now there are no real red unions; they have been wiped out.

All work has been abandoned."[30] The Japanese invasion in the year 1931 infused some life in the labour movement. There were strikes and widespread agitation. But even then the Communist Party was completely isolated. "The struggles were sporadic, spontaneous, lacking organisation and leadership. The great difficulty is that we have no good cadres in the factories. Our organisation does not understand very well what the conditions are in the factories, so that we are not able to put forward the most pressing demands of the workers. We have not succeeded in organising a single anti-imperialist strike."[31]

In view of these facts, it is no wonder that the slogans of armed uprising and Soviets found very little response from the masses. Only nominally the Communist Party survived the prolonged reign of terror which was established expressly for its extermination. It was driven into an illegal existence throughout the country, except in the remote limited areas where it could function spasmodically through armed bands. Its leading cadre was nearly destroyed. Consequently, it almost ceased to be an effective factor in the political life of the country. It was defeated, very heavily, though not altogether destroyed.

The policy of the Communist Party since the middle of 1927 was sterile, while that of the previous period had been fatal. Not only the workers and peasants, but also the poor intellectuals, artisans, small traders etc., betrayed by the nationalist bourgeoisie, were looking for a new leadership of the still incomplete struggle for national democratic freedom. If the Communists even then realised that they were making a series of new mistakes in order to rectify old ones, and adopted tactics suitable to the requirements of the situation, the passive sympathy of the democratic masses would transform itself into active support- But unfortunately that did not happen.

The Chinese Revolution, indeed, is a part of the world-wide struggle for overthrowing capitalism. Nevertheless, it does not outgrow the democratic stage and become a struggle for Socialism simply because the nationalist bourgeoisie had turned against it. It must still go through a period of transition, in which the non-proletarian and semi-proletarian elements should be mobilised under the hegemony of the proletariat for the realisation of the programme of bourgeois-democratic revolution, namely, subversion of the

pre-capitalist social relations and establishment of democratic freedom. There are numerous classes—the urban petit-bourgeoisie and the peasantry—which are active factors of the revolution, in addition to the proletariat. Indeed, in a democratic revolution, the former are of great importance, constituting its social basis, though in the given situation the latter can greatly influence its leadership and perspective of development. The treachery of the big bourgeoisie, the debacle of petit-bourgeois radicalism, the exposure of Sun Yat-senism as a counter-revolutionary cult,—all these factors drive the democratic masses closer to the Communist Party. But they would not accept the Communist programme. If they rally round the Communist Party, that is because they expect from it a bolder leadership in the struggle for democratic freedom. Soviets and Red Army are not the suitable organs for that struggle. In any case, they are wrong names given to organs of struggle created by the democratic masses. The mistake of choosing those wrong slogans restricts the scope of the movement under Communist leadership, because they do not attract the democratic masses objectively involved in the revolution in the present stage of development.

Its own metamorphosis should have helped the Communist Party to have a realistic appreciation of the relation of social forces actually in operation. From 1928 to 1930, the social composition of the party itself changed very remarkably. Already in the beginning of 1929, the bulk of its membership was in the village. It lost pratically all footing in the cities—the social base of operation of a truly Communist Party. Even if it is argued that terror hindered the reorganisation of the party in the cities, where repression could be more effective than in remote rural areas, yet it must be admitted that by 1930 the Communist Party, in its social composition, had virtually become a peasants' party. In the urban areas, thirty per cent of the membership was recruited from the petit-bourgeoisie—artisans, small traders, employees, poor intellectuals etc. It can be reasonably assumed that also in the rural areas these elements were equally represented in the party. Admittedly, the bulk of its membership being in the rural districts, the party must have been mostly composed of petit-bourgeois elements including^the peasantry.

During this period, great increase in the membership of the party was reported. In the earlier part of 1927, the party had a membership of 50,000. During a year of white terror, which followed

the triumph of counter-revolution, no less than 25,000 Communists had fallen. A large number of petit-bourgeois intellectuals, who had joined the party in the period of revolutionary upheaval, had left its ranks in the days of bloody suppression. Yet, in the middle of 1929, the party claimed a membership of 130,000. If that was true, then, more than a hundred thousand new members must have joined it just when the party stood under the heavy fire of terror which drove it away from the cities and industrial centres. Obviously, there was much exaggeration in the report about the increase of membership. But making due allowance for that, there is no reason to believe that the reports were altogether imaginary. The very significant deduction to be made from it is that the new mass influx into the party was of an entirely different social composition. The large membership figures can be explained only on the assumption that, wherever a Soviet was established, practically the entire adult population of the poorer classes declared their adhesion to the Communist Party. Such a party was no longer a proletarian party, although it was certainly still a revolutionary party. The very significant radical change in the social composition of the party is revealed by official reports and other documents. The proletarian element in the party declined from ten per cent in 1928 to three per cent in 1929, two per cent in 1930, by the end of which year, it almost disappeared.[32]

From these facts, it is evident that the party was then Communist only in name. But just when it became practically ineffective as the fighting organ of the revolutionary proletariat, just at the moment non-proletarian and semi-proletarian masses flocked under its banner. Important political deductions should have been made from that fact. That was not done, and the party failed to adopt a tactical line suitable to the social conditions, and revise its political orientation. Its task was to create a platform for the semi-proletarian, petit-bourgeois masses (including the peasantry) engaged in a revolutionary struggle. The way followed since the Nanchang insurrection ended in a blind alley, because the Communist Party disregarded the social character of the forces accepting its leadership, because it did not adapt itself to the peculiar circumstances under which the struggle for democratic freedom must be conducted, step by step until the capture of power.

The overwhelming majority and the most active elements of the revolutionary army came from the peasantry; the revolution unmis-

takably was still in the democratic stage. Its immediate task, therefore, was to organise the non-ptoletarian and semi-proletarian revolutionary forces in the first place—together with the proletariat. Inasmuch as this organisation takes place under the leadership of the Communist Party, it represents an advance towards the capture of power by the revolutionary democratic masses under the hegemony of the proletariat. The tragic and costly experiment since the disaster in the summer of 1927 proved that the indiscriminate armed uprising and the establishment of "Soviet Republics" did not correspond with the conditions under which the revolutionary struggle in China had to be conducted.

Moreover, the Soviet system of State itself must be adapted to the peculiar conditions of the country and the characteristic features of the revolution. The creation of the People's Council during the Shanghai insurrection in the beginning of 1927 showed the way in which the organs of popular power could rise in China. The Council was composed of representatives of the organisations of workers, artisans, employees, students and traders, and was dominated by the proletariat. It seized political power even before the Nationalist Army had occupied the city. Even earlier, throughout the nationalist territories, to a very large extent, political power had been captured by the peasant unions which included all the rural democratic elements (artisans, small traders, students etc.) in addition to the peasants. The City Council of Shanghai was a really democratic body, which differed from a bourgeois parliament in that it was organically connected with the organised masses, and was directly subordinated to their control. The rise of such an organ of power of the popular masses creates the condition for an armed uprising and guarantees its success. When the nationalist bourgeoisie desired to set up a military dictatorship, the counter-move of the Communists should have been an agitation for the creation of such popular organs of power. In that case, they would not be driven to the romantic policy of establishing "Soviet Republics" in the wilderness of mountainous regions. The agitation would have secured for the Communist Party the support of the masses throughout the country, and would have led to the mobilisation of forces for preparing the ground for a Successful capture of power. Had the Communist Party directed its activities on this line, suitable to the conditions under which the struggle is to be conducted, then, it could have not only prevented the

annihilation of its best forces in hopeless adventures, but also could have organised an effective resistance against the counter-revolutionary offensive of the bourgeoisie.

The immediate task of the revolution is to overthrow the military dictatorship of the so-called Nationalist Government of Nanking. A democratic mass movement is the way to the accomplishment of that task. Only a correct tactical line on the part of the Communists can mobilise the democratic masses in a revolutionary struggle. The Nanking Government has not introduced any democratic freedom; nor would any rival nationalist clique do that if it came to power. They all preach the principles of Sun Yat-sen, according to which there must be an unlimited period of trusteeship before the right of self-government could be bestowed upon the people. For historical reasons, and owing to the character of Chinese national economy, the bourgeoisie are incapable of creating a modern democratic State. They can only try to set up a military dictatorship in alliance with the native feudal reaction and foreign Imperialism for oppressing and exploiting the masses. Therefore, the mobilisation of the democratic masses in a struggle against the nationalist military dictatorship is the immediate task of the revolution. The overwhelming majority of the popular masses throughout the country would join the struggle, by leading which the Communists could recover their position as the dominating factor of the situation. Only in that way can the democratic revolution, betrayed by the nationalist bourgeoisie, further develop under the hegemony of the proletariat.

An agitation demanding the election of People's Councils by the so-called "people's organisations"[33]—the organisations of the workers, peasants, artisans, students, employees, small traders, etc.,—will effectively stimulate the mass struggle against military dictatorship. Such Councils should be first created locally; then, the demand should be pressed for their electing delegates to a National Assembly to function as the central organ of revolutionary democratic power. The National Democratic Revolution will triumph; foreign Imperialism will be defeated; native feudal-bourgeois reaction will be driven out of power; and the country will be brought under a centralised government to undertake its economic reconstruction on a line that will go directly towards the establishment of Socialism.

Notes

The meeting of the Executive Committee of the Communist International in November 1926 adopted a new thesis on the Chinese question, the central point of which was that the Chinese Revolution must from that time be developed as an agrarian revolution. The leadership of the Chinese Communist Party as well as the representatives of the C.I. in China were of a different view. They still maintained that the nationalist bourgeoisie should be helped to lead the revolution and class struggle should not be accentuated for the sake of national unity. 1 was alone to advocate the different point of view that the Chinese Revolution had reached a critical moment in which it must strike out a new course and a fetish should not be made of the alliance with the Kuo Min Tang. The Executive of the C.I. adopted my point of view, which was opposed in the beginning by Stalin himself. But Stalin was brought around to my view and the Thesis adopted by the E.C.C.I. was drafted by me. Immediately afterwards, I left for China as the head of a new delegation of the C.I. Soon after'my arrival there, the Fifth Congress of the C.P. of China met at Hankow in May 1927. The leadership of the C.P. were opposed to the new directions of the C I. But I persuaded the Fifth Congress to endorse the new line in spite of the opposition of practically all the leaders of the party. In a book published officially in Moscow in 1932, that is three years after I had ceased to be a member of the C.I.P. Mif wrote : "It was Roy who gave the young Chinese party for the first time a real Leninist prognosis of the events taking place. From Roy, the party heard for the first time a thoroughly thought-out perspective of the movement, and received directives on a series of cardinal questions. Roy gave the young Chinese Party the experience of world Bolshevism."

Mif was a worker in the Eastern Department of the Comintern. In the beginning of 1926, he was sent to China for organising party schools. Later on, in 1930, Mif became the representative of the C.I. in China. On his return to Moscow, he wrote his book "The Chinese Revolution" from which the above quotation is taken. No book, dealing particularly with party politics, can be published in Moscow without official approval.

The following quotation is from another book "The Chinese Revolution" by Chiu Chiu-pei. He was a leading member of the Central Committee of the C.P. of China at the time of the Fifth Congress. Describing the tendencies in the Fifth Congress, he wrote : Borodin's line was retreat and the slackening of the agrarian revolution; concessions to the so-called industrialists and merchants; concessions to the landlords and gentry; alliance with Feng Yu-hsiang to overthrow Chiang Kai-shek; and with such a policy lead the left leaders against the right reactionary forces of Wuhan and Nanking. Roy was for relative concessions to the businessmen; against conceding anything to the landlord and gentry class; for small concessions to all small

landlords and the revolutionary generals. The Central Committee of the party was for complete concessions to the businessmen, complete concessions to the landlords and gentry, considering that the agrarian revolution could not be realised immediately, but required an adequate period of propaganda, considering it best to let the Left Kuo Min Tang to lead and for us to go off the path a bit so that the revolution should not be prematurely advanced."

Chiu Chiu-pei was a special favourite of Borodin. Together with the other members of the old Central Committee, he was condemned by the C.I. for the opportunist policy pursued during the crisis of 1927. In the above book, written afterwards, he admitted the mistakes made by himself and the Central Committee in spite of the advice I gave as the representative of the Communist International—Author. 2. On these grounds I opposed the new military campaign and advised the Communist Party to advocate an alternative plan of action. It was to deepen the social base of the Wuhan Government by carrying on the agrarian revolution in the provinces under its control. Concrete measures I suggested were : (1) Extermination of the reactionary forces in the countryside, namely, the landlords, money-lenders and the village gentry; (2) Extension of its effective power to the southern provinces of Kwangtung (the original base of the nationalists) and Kiangsi; and (3) Movement of the revolutionary troops under the actual control of the Nationalist Government southward with the purpose of helping the realisation of these objects.

"A powerful mass movement had developed in those four provinces (with a total population of nearly 100 millions) on the occasion of the march of the Nationalist Army from Canton to the Yangtse. There were about a million workers and five times as many peasants organised. General political consciousness was very advanced. Firmly established in these provinces, the Wuhan Government would be almost invulnerable. Having taken up that strategic position, it would be able to encircle Shanghai from inland, and to defeat ihe combined forces of Chiang Kai-shek and international Imperialism. Meanwhile, Feng Yu-hsiang might be asked to advance eastward to threaten the flank of Chiang, should he march to Peking, on the Tientsin-Pukow Railway, Holding the Lunghai Railway, that joins the two trunk lines connecting Peking with the Yangtse valley, as his base, Feng could press towards the north. That would be a bait to keep him away from Chiang Kai-shek.

"The Communist leaders would not accept the alternative plan of action. They argued that refusal to support the second North Expedition would amount to a break with the Left Kuo Min Tang. Borodin propounded a defeatist theory. He argued that Wuhan could not be held because the revolutionary forces were very weak. Therefore, he advocated that the remains of the ruins must be safely withdrawn to a new base in the north-west. That was a fantastic proposition which revealed

a remarkable lack of faith in the masses," tragically shared by the entire leadership of the C.P. His other astounding proposition was to set a conglomeration of military forces in motion with the hope that something positive might come out of the chaos. Fatalism, still another fountain-head of opportunism! The Communist Party, being controlled by opportunists, who in the revolutionary crisis exposed themselves as such hopeless imbeciles, it would have been a veritable miracle if the almost certain disaster had been averted.

"Even such a miracle could possibly have been worked, had the Communist leaders at the eleventh hour shown some understanding of revolutionary tactics. Had the Wuhan Government been given clearly to understand that the Communist Party would not endorse the military adventure, the plan might have been abandoned; for, without the support of the masses, the campaign could not have been undertaken with any hope of success. The Communists still held the key-position. Instead of dictating terms, while they still could do so, they capitulated. They called upon the masses to support a consciously counter-revolutionary military adventure. The old theory of first broadening the revolution was again expounded. It was contended that insistence upon the solution of the agrarian problem in the nationalist territories would mean war with the Kuo Min Tang.

"I referred the disputed question to Moscow. The answer was ambiguous. It was in favour of doing both the things simultaneously: to carry on the military plan, and develop the revolution in the territories of the Wuhan Government. That was an impossibility. It proved to be so in experience before long." (M.N. Roy, "My Experience in China", pp. 42-44, 2nd edition, Calcutta).

3. "I vigorously objected to the Communist undertaking the task of checking the revolutionary action of the peasants, in order to placate the reactionary army officers. I pointed out that the suicidal policy of restraining the development of the agrarian revolution on the plea of not disturbing the rear, when the army was fighting on the front, had already enabled the forces of reaction to go over to the offensive. Further restraint would demoralise the peasants' movement, and encourage counter-revolution to raise its bloody head in the villages. But my objection was disregarded.

"Thereupon, I suggested that Tan Ping-san might go with the instruction that, when on the spot, his mission should be not to check the "excesses" of the peasants' movement, but to set up village self-government, investing the peasants' unions with the necessary political power. That would be setting up Soviets in fact, if not in name. The peasants' unions were the rallying ground of the rural oppressed and exploited masses. In his capacity of the Minister of Interior, Tan Ping-san was in charge of local self-government and police. The action proposed^ therefore, was within his official competence. Properly and courageously guided, the peasants' unions could easily become basic units of revolutionary State, disarm the rowdies and ruffians in the pay of the landlords}

and create a militia as the nucleus of a real revolutionary army.

"The rank and file Communists, working in the villages, were eagefr for such a line of action, but they were restrained by orders of the Central Committee of the party. Many of them lost patience, and acted independently under the pressure of the masses." *(Ibid.,* p, 44).

4. The instructions were sent without my knowledge even when the plan reported in the next foot note was being discussed. —Author.

5. It was no longer possible for the Communists to continue playing the second fiddle. It was no longer mere opportunism. It would be a criminal and rank betrayal of the revolution. I proposed that the Central Committee of the C.P. should address an Open Letter to the Kuo Min Tang, exposing the latter's counter-revolutionary crimes of commission and omission. The Open Letter should be an ultimatum, and the signal for a general revolutionary offensive under the independent leadership of the C.P.

"For concrete action, I proposed: 1. The peasants to be led in an attack upon Changsha, supported by a quickly raised irregular army commanded by Communists and revolutionary nationalists; 2. Strike in the Hanyang arsenal with the demand that 25 per cent of the arms and munitions produced should be handed over to the trade-unions for the purpose of creating a workers militia as a guarantee against counter-revolution ; 3. A mass demonstration in support of the demand of the arsenal workers, to endorse the Open Letter of the Communist Party, and to demand that the Nationalist Government and the Kuo Min Tang should immediately call upon the peasants to overthrow the counter-revolutionary insurgents of Changsha, and to destroy rural reaction; 4. General strike to enforce the demand formulated by the demonstration. Finally, an armed uprising, to begin with the capture of the arsenal.

"The plan of action appeared fantastic to the Communist leaders, trained in the school of systematic opportunism. Instead of listening to my arguments in favour of determined offensive, the only creditable way out of the situation, thsy yielded to all the counter-revolutionary demands of the "Left" Kuo Min Tang. . . .

"In despair, I tried to act over the head of the impossible Political Bureau of the Communist Party. I demanded a plenary meeting of the Central Committee to be attended by local leaders. The demand was opposed on the plea that important members of the party could not leave their respective posts in those critical days. The top leaders were against the plenary session, because local workers were impatient for decisive action and would have surely endorsed my plan. As the last resort, I sought to act with the co-operation of individual comrades, Chinese as well as Russian. Galen (the Chief Military Adviser to the Nationalist Government) was fully in agreement with me. Many other Russian comrades had also come around to my view by that time. But all power was centred in the hands of Borodin. Moscow had backed

me up politically as against his opportunism. Nevertheless," in other respects, he wa s still left in the controlling position, and consequently functioned as the dictator of the Communist Party. Being mostly his disciples, and ideologically akin to his way, the top leaders of the C.P. of China followed him, disregarding repeatedly the instructions of the InternationaL and in defiance of its representative on the spot.

"It was possible to raise an irregular force, several thousand strong for temporary operations against Changsha, pending the formation of the revolutionary army with peasant volunteers. To secure the services of the improvised force, it was necessary to pay the troops a month's wages in advance. Borodin controlled the purse-strings. In the beginning he promised to supply the required money. When all arrangements were made, in spite of the criminal non cooperation of the leaders of the C.P., and the peasants' unions had been instructed to besiege Changsha, he failed to keep his promise. Consequently, the plan had to be abandoned.

"At Wuhan, there was a demonstration, but not with the original purpose which was to give the signal for the planned insurrection. The plan was to declare a one-day general strike on the occasion of the return of the representatives of the Government to the Conference with Feng Yu-hsiang at the front. All the workers of the three cities were together at the meeting to be addressed by the nationalist leaders. From the platform, the representative of the Communist party was to demand action according to the resolution of the party, and, the nationalist leaders failing to sanction it, to take them prisoners as the signal for the planned insurrection. Ten thousand workers in the nearby Hanyang arsenal were ready to take possession of it on that signal. But the demonstration turned out to be a welcome to the commanders of the 'victorious' army." *(Ibid.,* pp 45-48).

6. I did not attend the meeting having declined to act any longer as the representative of the C.I.—Author.

7. Deng Chen-tsah, "The Canton Commune and the Tactics of the Communist Party", page 39. 8 Yeh Ting's *Report on the Canton Insurrection.*

9. Lozowsky, "Canton Commune".

10. Lominadne, "The Anniversary of the Canton Commune".

11. Chiu Chiu-pei, "Chinese Revolution".

12. The resolution on the Chinese question, adopted by the Ninth Plenum of theE.C.C.I.

13. Huang Ping, "Canton Commune".

14. *Ibid.*

15. Wang Min, General Secretary of the Communist Party of China, "The Lessons of the Canton Commune".

16. Neumann's report.

17. Huang Ping, "Canton Commune".

18. Lozowski, "Canton Commune".

CHAPTER XXI

THE STRUGGLE FOR POWER

The fusion of the two rival nationalist factions was a very devious and protracted process. The revolution having been betrayed by both the groups with equal ferocity, there began the endless struggle for power. The dominating factor of the new situation, however, was neither of them. The leadership of the process of the consolidation of counter-revolution was assumed by the so-called Western Hill Conference group. The big bourgeoisie appeared on the scene as soon as their agents in both the Kuo Min Tang factions had accomplished the dirty job of killing the Communists and massacring the revolutionary masses.

In 1911, the big bourgeoisie had succeeded in inducing Sun Yat-sen to deliver the new-born Republic to the tender mercies of the monarchist Yuan Shih-kai. The bankers, industrialists and compradores, represented by the Western Hill Conference group, had then opposed the reorganisation of the Kuo Min Tang on a broad popular basis and with a democratic programme. But in 1924, nationalism had found a mass basis, and Sun Yat-sen was forced to act contrary to the counsel of the counter-revolutionary bourgeois politicians. Having failed to stop its reorganisation, the latter had left the Kuo Min Tang. But their agents remained inside the party with the object of checking its development into an organ of revolutionary struggle. Later on, most of them also were driven out. Finally, in 1925, they met in the so-called Western Hill Conference and constituted themselves as the "White Kuo Min Tang", with the declared object of fighting Communism and Russian influence. During the short period of 1925-26, when under the pressure of the masses the Kuo Min Tang conducted a revolutionary struggle, it was entirely beyond the control of the "Old Guard". They looked upon

the stormy march of events with great misgivings, but could hardly do anything to arrest it. They had to be content with counterrevolutionary intrigues, and bide time.

As last, their opportunity came. By declaring war upon the Communists and betraying the democratic masses, both the rival Kuo Min Tang factions again accepted the leadership of the "Old Guard". On the conclusion of the feud between the two factions, in August 1927, the big bourgeoisie reappeared on the political scene to thrive lik worms on the dead body of the revolution.

Chiang Kai-shek was the first to win the patronage of the "Old Guard". As the reward for his bloody suppression of the revolutionary mass upheaval he received a loan of thirty million dollars from the Shanghai bankers. The White Kuo Min Tang extended to him political support also. "No governmental group in China started under better auspices than that which composed the Nanking Government. . . . The Shanghai Chinese bankers and merchants were willing to support and finance the new Government on the understanding that the Communists should be suppressed."[1] Chiang Kai-shek qualified himself for further patronage by ruthlessly carrying through the campaign for "purging the party". On the one hand, the Communists were massacred and all other revolutionary elements were expelled from the party; on the other hand, the representatives of the counterrevolutionary big bourgeoisie were not only readmitted, but were allowed to capture its virtual leadership. The representative of the Hongkong compradores, Hu Han-min, who had been driven out of "Red" Canton for his complicity with the assassination of Liao Chung-hai, not only was welcomed back into the party but was appointed the civil head of the Nanking Government. The arch-reactionary C.C. Wu, an accomplice of Chiang Kai-shek in the *loupd'efat* of March 20, 1926, and later driven out of Canton, denounced by the latter himself as an agent of British Imperialism, also returned to become the Foreign Minister of the new Government. The big bourgeoisie not only regained the control of the discredited Kuo Min Tang but took possession of the Nationalist Government of Nanking to use it for their own purpose.

At the end of August 1927, a delegation from Wuhan, headed by Wang Chin-wei, came to the "Unity Conference" of Kiukiang. The Nanking group was represented by C.C. Wu. Two weeks later,

the redoubtable reactionary C.C. Wu, denounced only a year ago publicly as an agent of British Imperialism, conducted the discredited leader of petit-bourgeois radicalism, the standard-bearer of "pure Sun Yat-senism", into the inner conclave of bourgeois counter-revolution. Chaperoned by C.C. Wu, accompanied by the Mandarin General Tan Yen-kai, and the bourgeois politician Sun Fo, he went to Shanghai to make amends for his sins. The atonement demanded of him was self-elimination. The counter-revolutionary conclave was not too exacting. They made it possible for the repentant prodigal to swallow the bitter dose without losing face. To enable Wang Chin-wei to perform self-effacement gracefully, they had already sent their pet protege Chiang Kai-shek away for a temporary holiday. On August 12, the latter had resigned the post of the Commander-in-Chief of the Nationalist Army, and had announced his desire to go abroad "for study".

Wang Chin-wei, in his turn, also played th? part allotted to him. In an address to the party he declared: "The present meeting and cooperation of our Nanking and Hankow comrades were the result of a telegram dated August 8 from our Nanking comrades to which the Wuhan comrades replied on the 10th. Our Nanking comrades confessed to having been careless in their action, and having erred in many instances; while our Wuhan comrades confessed to having delayed in the resistance to, and suppression of, the Communists. Now our comrades of both Wuhan and Nanking, in a spirit of self-denunciation and of tolerance, with the wish of remedying the entire situation, are unanimous in their aim to restore the shattered party its original organisation, The reason why I, Chin-wei, having already blundered, did not resign sooner, was because it has been my hope to bring about the cherished union of the party. Today it is almost achieved, and I, Chin-wei, therefore recognise that the time for me to retire has arrived."

In another telegram, addressed at the same time to the Central Committee of the party, the repentant sinner bitterly reproached himself for the tardiness in acting against the Communists, and declared his intention to punish himself to justify his comrades. The message was concluded with the following declaration of abject surrender: "This is the time for me to retire and to wait for your judgment. I further respectfully request that you deal with me strictly, in order to do justice to my comrades. I humbly await your verdict."

That was an unconditional recantation of whatever the petit-bourgeois left wing had done ever since it was forced by the revolutionary democratic masses to assume the leadership of the Kuo Min Tang. By lovingly .referring to the Nanking faction as "our comrades", Wang Chin-wei emphasised that there was no basic difference between the two rival groups. Obviously under the dictation of the "Old Guard", the repentant prodigal fully endorsed all the actions of his rival, Chiang, whom he had so vehemently condemned during the preceding year. He even asked for punishment, so that his "comrades", namely, Chiang and others who had preceded him in the massacre of the workers and peasants, might be vindicated. Finally, he handed over the leadership of the entire Kuo Min Tang to the counter-revolutionary "Old Guard" by advocating the restoration of the "original organisation" of the party. He delivered the heritage of Sun Yat-senism to its rightful heirs. Such was the pitiable swan song of petit-bourgeois radical nationalism.

Having forfeited the support of the revolutionary democratic masses and having betrayed the friendship of the Soviet Union, no Kuo Min Tang Government could exist without the patronage of the big bourgeoisie; and behind the latter there stood international Imperialism. Pending the interminable negotiations for the fusion of the two rival factions, the position of the Nationalist Government, at Wuhan as well as Nanking, became very precarious. In the former place the Government had practically ceased to exist. All the political leaders went away to confer with the rival group in Shanghai. Tang Shen-chi alone was left as the undisputed master of the situation. The position of the Nanking Government was no better. Tang Shen-chi sent an expedition down the Yangtse to invade the territories under its ccntrol. In order to resist that, and to suppress the Nanchang insurrection, Chiang Kai-shek was obliged to withdraw most of his troops from the northern front. That opened the road for Chang Tsung-chang. His army swept back down the Tientsin-Pukow Railway and regained possession of the southern terminus on the Yangtse, just across Nanking. On the other hand, Sun Chuang-fang's troops were threatening Shanghai from the North. In the southern provinces themselves, the authority of the Nanking Government was only nominal. Kwangtung and Kwangsi were practically autonomous. In such a situation, mercenary troops were the only mainstay for the Nanking Government. It needed money for the purpose, and money

in sufficiently large amount could come only from the bankers of Shanghai. So the latter became the real dictators of the situation.

The self-effacement of Wang Chin-wei opened the way for the return of Chiang Kai-shek. He was the chosen of the big bourgeoisie, the aspirant to Chinese Bonapartism. Upon the departure of Wang-Chin-wei, the Unity Conference held its final session at Nanking during the third week of September 1927. Its first act was to expel from the Kuo Min Tang the few minor left-wing leaders who had not completely capitulated. The vacancies caused on the Central Executive of the party by the massacre of the Communists and expulsion of the recalcitrant left-wingers, were filled up by the "White" Kuo Min Tang men who had fought against the party ever since 1924. The body, thus purged and packed, arbitrarily constituted itself as the "Central Special Committee", and invested itself with emergency power until the meeting of the Third Party Congress. As the counter-revolutionary "Special Committee" was to prepare for and convene the Congress, there could be no doubt about its outcome. Its function would be only to throw a pseudo-constitutional mantle on the doughty shoulders of the military dictatorship backed up by the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie.

The power assumed by the "Special Committee" was sweeping. It declared itself as the only party authority, thus putting an end to the aspiration of the Wuhan group, some of whose leaders had found place in the high council of dictatorship. The following passage from one of its resolutions shows how dictatorial was the power assumed by that self-appointed conclave of counter-revolutionaries: "That, since the central party headquarters and the Nationalist Government have both been reorganised by this committee, the Nationalist Government hitherto in function, and their allied organs, and the central party headquarters hitherto in function and all their allied organs, be declared to cease functioning and be taken over by the newly organised party headquarters and Government."[2] If one looks for any legal foundation of the Nationalist Government of Nanking, this arbitrary decree, issued by a self-constituted counter-revolutionary dictatorship, is the only document available.

As soon as the dictatorship was formally established, Chiang Kai-shek returned from his holiday in Japan to be its figure-head. Arriving at Shanghai on November 10, he declared publicly that he had abandoned his intention to go abroad for study on the urgent

request of the party, and particularly on the appeal of Wang Chin-wei. The latter returned from Canton to welcome personally his rival back to power. After a few days, Chiang Kai-shek resumed his office as the Generalissimo of the Nationalist Army. Instigated by his immediate followers, Wang Chin-wei made a last effort to pit the discredited party against the dictatorial "Special Committee". The result was the issue of a secret order for his arrest. He escaped and went abroad.

In the beginning of 1928, the bourgeoisie appeared to be rather well seated in the saddle of dictatorship. They believed to have killed the revolution successfully, and hoped to build up a centralised State with the patronage of foreign Imperialism. As soon as the tide of events definitely turned, and the couuter-revolutionary forces recaptured the leadership of the nationalist movement, a benevolent smile replaced the ominous frown of the Imperialist Powers. The British Foreign Secretary, Chamberlain, had taken the lead in mobilising the forces of international Imperialism against the Chinese Revolution. He was also the first to make the gesture of benevolence towards the counter-revolutionary Chinese bourgeoisie. Speaking at Birmingham on January 19, 1928, he made the following declaration about the future relations between Britain and China: "The active anti-foreign phase of the revolution has passed with the passing of Russian influence from the nationalist party. We cannot permit ourselves to be deprived, by forceful action, of our treaty rights, but we are ready at any moment in a generous spirit to negotiate with anyone, yho can speak for the Chinese people and can make engagements in their name and fulfil engagements made, in order to adjust old treaty rights to the new position, and give a generous satisfaction to the legitimate demands of the Chinese for the development of their nationality and independence."

Chamberlain did not make the statement of policy before getting well acquainted with the trend of events in China. Sir Frederick Whyte, head of the British delegation to the Conference of Pacific Relations, held in Honolulu in the middle of 1927, had spent the closing months of the year in China. On his return to England, he expressed the following opinion in an interview to the press: "The situation in China, I can sum up in a few sentences. The Chinese Revolution has reached a definite turning point, and the next few months will decide whether it shall develop along the evolutionary

lines of European liberalism, or the revolutionary lines of Soviet Russia. No doubt the action of the liberal Western Powers, Great Britain in particular, within the next month or two, will be an important factor in helping China to make the decision."

In a series of articles, contributed to the "Times" of London, Sir Frederick Whyte further pointed out that the followers of Sun Yat-sen were eager to receive foreign financial assistance for the development of their country, as visualised by their departed leader. About the same time, the American banker, Lament, also paid a visit to China. On his return, he declared that the Chinese nationalists could count upon the support of American finance, should they make serious efforts to set their house in order. Regarding Lament's statement as an invitation, the Nanking Government sent its Foreign Minister, C.C. Wu, as the special envoy to Washington, where he was cordially received. Shortly afterwards, a report was sent out from Washington, according to which a plan for the economic reconstruction of China was on foot. The plan "probably will involve the biggest banking transaction in the world's history"[3]. Evidently, the special envoy of the Nanking Government had made a good impression in Wall Street.

Imperialism was willing to help the Chinese bourgeoisie to establish some sort of order in their country, so that foreign capital could be invested there with greater security. Militarism had been too discredited to serve any longer as the weapon of imperialist domination. It should be discarded in favour of a new agency more suitable to the changed conditions of China as well as of Imperialism itself. The crisis of capitalism had raised the question of foreign markets more acutely than ever. China would provide a vast market, if she came out of the chaos of civil wars and be united under a central authoritry capable of establishing peaceful conditions. Moreover, the market was largely potential. Its development required investment of large capital. That again could not be available unless adequate security was available. The Nanking Government promised to create all these conditions necessary for an intensified exploitation of China in the interest of foreign Imperialism. Therefore, from the beginning, its foreign relations were favourable. Soon after the occupation of Peking and the formal liquidation of the imaginary Central Government there, it received *de jure* recognition from one imperialist Power after another. Following upon the establishment of

diplomatic relations, new customs, conventions were concluded, granting China some tariff autonomy according to the decision of the Washington Conference.

Inside the country also things looked rosy for the bourgeoisie. The authority of the Nationalist Government of Nanking appeared to be established beyond all serious contest. Practical!} the whole of the country, with the exception of the three Manchurian provinces, owed allegiance to it. Even the ruler of Manchuria, Chang Hsue-liang, agreed to hoist the national flag over his domain provided that there would be no objection from Japanese Imperialism. Not only Feng Yu-hsiang and Yen Hai-shan, absolute rulers of the territories respectively controlled by them, accepted high offices under the Nanking Government; the worthy son of the Manchurian War-Lord himself proclaimed his faith in the Three Principles of Sun Yat-sen, and consequently became an adherent of the Kuo Min Tang and a pillar of the Nationalist Government.

The victory of the bourgeoisie, however, was very superficial; the unity in the camp of counter-revolution was very precarious. The conditions for the creation of a centralised modern State were still very far from being realised. As soon as the bourgeoisie tried to rule actually, the mere formality of the jurisdiction of their Government became evident. The feudal-militarist rulers of the outlying provinces would owe formal allegiance to the Nanking Government, but not tolerate the least encroachment upon their power and privileges. The bourgeoisie themselves were split up into antagonistic factions byj sectional interests. The leaders of the "united party" were consequently divided among themselves, representing a variety of conflicting capitalist interests. Trading capital, drawing unlimited profit from the mediaeval structure of national economy, opposed the plan of economic reconstruction which would disrupt the conditions favourable for its operation. The interest of trading capital cut across the aspirations of the industrial bourgeoisie who wanted to break down all barriers to a free exchange of commodities. The bankers allied themselves with one or the other tendency, according to the enterprise in which they happened to be financially interested. Among themselves, t)iey were divided into two main groups, one favouring American, and the other English orientation in the foreign policy of the Nationalist Government. Because one group was connected with American, and the other group

with British Imperialist finance.

The instability of counter-revolution revealed itself as soon as the Nanking Government touched the burning problem of reconstructing the country ruined by a protracted civil war. Even if the bourgeoisie could possibly put aside their sectional interests for the consolidation of the position of their entire class, they were still very far from wielding effective power over their feudal allies. The situation became still worse and more complicated when, in the struggle for power, not only parasitic trading capital, but even the defeated and discredited petit-bourgeois left wing of the Kuo Min Tang joined hands with feudal reaction in order to resist the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. At the first test, it became evident that the authority of the Nanking Government was a fiction.

Ever since its inauguration, the Nanking Government had been living on loans from the Shanghai bankers. Although it claimed to be the central authority of the entire country, even in the middle of 1929, it could collect revenue only from the two provinces of Kiangsu and Chekiang adjoining Shanghai. But it had to spend money in all the provinces nominally under its jurisdiction. The allegiance of the Generals actually controlling the affairs of those provinces could be retained only so long as ample subsidy for the upkeep of their armies was given from Nanking.

In May 1929, the Nanking Government was indebted to the Shanghai bankers for 126,000,000 dollars bearing an average interest of 9.5 per cent, and secured by the revenue to be derived from the 2.5 per cent surtax on customs duties granted by the Washington Agreement. The actual income of the Government at that time was about five million dollars a month, collected in the two provinces under its effective control. The monthly expenditure in those two provinces alone was approximately nine million dollars. So, financially, the Nationalist Government was altogether insolvent. Illusory military victories, fictitious political authority and bombastic plans of economic reconstruction were poor assets. They could command no credit either at home or abroad. The Shanghai bankers held their purse-strings tight, refusing to grant further loans, unless the finances of the Nationalist Government were placed on a solid basis. In that situation, there could be no hope of a foreign loan. The imperialist Powers smiled approvingly when the Chinese bourgeoisie betrayed the Democratic Revolution. They held out tempting prizes for that

meritorious deed; but actual money or political concession was not available. To deserve that, the Nationalist Government must prove that it was really the master of the situation. And facts presently proved that the contrary was the case. The power of the Nanking Government was a fiction. It was aspiring to set up a counterrevolutionary dictatorship (political tutelage a la Sun Yat-sen) on a foundation of fleeting sand. It was building castles in the air.

While it was in such a precarious plight, the Shylock of Shanghai damanded his pound of flesh. The big bourgeoisie had helped the counter-revolutionary nationalists to set up a Government to act as the weapon for extending their power throughout the country. Development of capitalism required pacification of the country, reduction of military expenditure, removal of feudal restrictions on trade, centralisation of national finance, and curtailment of the arbitrary power wielded by the feudal-militarist provincial potentates. The task of the Nanking Government was to carry through those measures. But such a task could be accomplished only by an organ of political power growing out of a victorious bourgeois democratic revolution. Thriving on the prostrate body of the revolution, the Nanking Government could not possibly be equal to the task. Its founders had defeated the revolution in alliance with those very social forces, and for defending those very social conditions, the destruction of which was necessary for a normal capitalist development of the country. Its crimes against the revolution rendered it unable to further the interests even of the bourgeoisie.

In June 1929, representatives of the banking, commercial and industrial interests from all parts of the country met in Shanghai with the object of formulating the financial and economic policy of the Nationalist Government. The Finance Minister of the Nanking Government, T. V. Soong, himself intimately connected with the banking world of Shanghai, was present at the conference to take orders from the task-master of his Government. The antagonistic Interests of the different sections of the bourgeoisie clashed, almost wrecking the conference. A general agreement was reached only on one point, namely, the reduction of military expenditure and employment of the disbanded soldiers in productive labour. In the very beginning of its constructive effort, the Nanking Government came up against the basic problem of the situation. The future of the country depended on the solution of that problem. But the solu-

tion was a revolution. The imbecility of a counter-revolutionary Government was bound to stand naked before the vital problem of social reconstruction.

The bourgeoisie, however, were very exacting. They set the baffling problem to the Nanking politicians, and ordered them to tackle it as the condition for further support. Acting upon the peremptory order of the bourgeoisie, the Nanking Government adopted a very bombastic Reconstruction Plan. The following were its main items: (1) The armed forces of the country to be reduced to a standing army, directly under the command of the Government, of 500,000. (At that time there were nearly a million and a half men under arms throughout the country). (2) The national budget for the army and navy not to exceed 192,000,000 dollars. (3) Construction of roads and improvement of waterways for employing the disbanded soldiers. (4) Settlement of demobilised soldiers on the waste-lands in the outlying provinces. (5) Unification of currency. (6) Abolition of the *likin* (internal transit tax); and (7) Centralisation of national finance.

The interests of the bourgeoisie demanded those measures; their introduction would revolutionise the country. In his report to the National Economic Conference, the Finance Minister, T.V. Soong, estimated the total national revenue to be 450,000,000 dollars. Of that, only about 600,000,000 were actually collected by the Nanking Government. The rest was appropriated by the provincial and local rulers. The total military expenditure of the country was estimated at 380,000,000 dollars. That huge sum was raised by the feudal militarists who were absolute monarchs of territories respectively occupied by themselves. "Illegal, extraordinary and irregular taxes and financial measures have come into existence during the whole course of the civil warfare. Few of them are in the category of national taxes, but have been imposed by militarists and provincial officials".[4] The internal transit tax was a profitable source of income for the feudal-militarist and provincial rulers. There were more than five hundred *likin* stations throughout the country. The total amount of levy taken at those numerous stations could never be accurately estimated; but the nominal share of the Central Government had never been more than forty million dollars a year. It was commonly believed that at least that much more was pocketed by the officials on the spot; and only a fraction of the nominal share of the Govern-

ment ever actually reached the National Exchequer. *Likin* was ruinous for the development of internal trade. Therefore, its abolition was pressingly demanded by the bourgeoisie.

But the main demand of the bourgeoisie was the limitation of the army which absorbed, according to the report of T.V. Soong, nearly eighty-five per cent of the entire national revenue. Without a drastic reduction of the military expenditure, any financial rehabilitation of the country evidently was not possible. Even if, by some miracle, the entire national revenue could be taken into the Central Treasury, the Government would still be very far from financial solvency, so long as the military budget was not substantially retrenched. After the military bill was footed, only seventy million dollars would be left in the Treasury. That would not be nearly enough for paying the interests on foreign and internal loans which amounted to 130,000,000 dollars a year. In such a state of hopeless financial insolvency, the Nationalist Government could not expect any further loan, either from the native bankers or from abroad; and without money, all its bombastic plans would remain on paper.

So, the reduction of military expenditure, through the disband-ment of the bulk of the armed forces, became the central problem for the Nationalist Government. The last word again belonged to feudal Generals. In order to make a bid for real power, the bourgeoisie must have a trial of strength with their feudal allies. In the beginning, there prevailed great optimism about the disbandment of troops. The "Big Five" controlling the military forces in the provinces formally under the jurisdiction of Nanking, met in a conference there. Deliberations took place behina closed doors. Finally, a Communique was issued stating that the war-lords had agreed to place their armies directly at the disposal of the Nationalist Government which would set up a Disbandment Commission. On the face of it, that was a very good resolution. The Nanking Government appeared to be the central authority of the country, not only in name, but in reality as well. The bourgeoisie appeared to be the masters of the situation— in real power so as to dictate terms to the feudal war-lords who had ruled and ruined the country for fifteen years. The Nationalist Finance Minister, representing the bourgeoisie, told the assembled Generals that the country was on the verge of ruin; that' the Government was financially bankrupt; that no further taxation was possible; that no new loans could be raised before old obligations

were met; and that substantial reduction of military expenditure was the only way out of the impasse. He demanded that "the Ministry of Finance must have complete control of the national revenue, full power to appoint and dismiss officials, and adequate protection against interference by the militarists." In other words, he exhorted the real rulers of the country to abdicate, so that the bourgeoisie could inherit political power automatically.

The hard-headed war-lords listened patiently to the eloquence of the youthful section of the ambitious bourgeoisie, and stolidly signed an agreement which, if meant to be observed, was nothing less than abdication of power and self-elimination. The substance of the agreement was that the armed forces should be reduced by half, costing no more than 192,000,000 dollars a year (representing forty-one per cent of the estimated total of national revenue); that the national revenue should be centralised, and the reduced army paid from the Ministry of Finance; that all the arsenals of the country should be placed under the control of the Central Government and the manufacture of arms and ammunitions should cease; that the older officers and men should be pensioned off; and that the rest would be disbanded in proportion as productive employment was found for them.

Evidently, the agreement was signed by the Generals without the least intention of observing it. It implied huge disbursements from the National Exchequer before the latter could be practically benefited by the operation of the agreement. It would take plenty of time to build up an efficient State apparatus for bringing the national revenue actually in the Central Exchequer. Meanwhile, 192,000,000 dollars a year should be found for the military budget. As under the given financial condition the Central Government could not possibly find the money, the agreement did not bind the hands of the Generals who could go ahead indefinitely, as before, on the plea that the other party did not fulfil the contract. Then, in the absence of sufficient capital necessary for the purpose, productive work for the disbanded soldiers could not be created. According to the estimate of T.V. Soong, at least 250,000,000 dollars of initial capital was required to finance public works, settlements, colonisation of waste-lands, etc., on a sufficiently large scale to absorb nearly a million men to be disbanded according to the agreement. Evidently, the plausible resolution of the Disbandment Conference was not to be realised. It was a very

adroit move on the part of the feudal militarists to sign the contract. By doing so they simply mocked at the imbecility of the ambitious bourgeoisie.

Having signed the face-saving agreement, the war-lords returned to their respective domains. They checkmated the bourgeoisie in the struggle for power around the conference table. Now the stuggle was to break out in the open, and lead to a new period of civil war.

The clash occurred first between the two factions inside the clique which originally constituted the basis of the Nanking Government. The dictatorship growing out of the counter-revolution of 1927, represented an alliance of the bourgeoisie and the so-called "Kwangsi Group", composed of the feudal militarists and compradores of the South. While the provinces north of the Yangtse, formally adhering to the Nanking Government, remained under the control of Feng Yu-hsiang and Yen Hsi-shan, the southern provinces were divided between the two factions composing the Nanking ruling clique. The danger of revolution having been warded off, the bourgeoisie tried to push the Kwansi feudals out of the Nanking dictatorship. As a counter-move, the Kwansi Group established itself in the provinces of Hupeh, Hunan, Kwangtung and Kwangsi, with its headquarters at Hankow.

Much too preoccupied with the task of taking Peking and settling accounts not only with Feng and Yen, but also with the Manchurian War-Lord, Chiang Kai-shek could not prevent the consolidation of the rival faction. But he turned his attention into that direction as soon as the affairs in the North were ijxed up, foreign relations satisfactorily established, and the occupation of Shantung by Nanking troops thwarted Feng's ambition to have an access to the sea. But the Kwangsi Group acted in anticipation. Suspecting that the Governor of the rich province of Hunan was in secret negotiation with Nanking, they removed him from his post on the pretext of his leniency towards the Communists. The Nanking Government severely censured that action as violation of the central authority. The rebels retorted by asserting that the provincial authorities had the right to appoint and dismiss officials in their jurisdiction. They moved troops in positions of defence, thus heading off the planned attack from Nanking. The fictitious character of the unification of the country under the Nanking Government was revealed. Hardly a month ago the Generals had signed the agreement to place their troops under the

supreme command of the Nationalist Government. The worthlsssness of that agreement became evident much earlier than expected.

A few days later, in his speech to the Third Congress of the Kuo Min Tang, Chiang Kai-shek complained : "It is not possible to say that China is now really united; for provincial Governments are acting independently, buying arms and recruiting troops without the sanction of the central authority, and often dictating terms to this latter by virtue of their military strength." He pointed out the revolt of the Kwangsi faction as the most recent case. The Congress being packed with his nominees, Chiang Kai-shek could easily cause the expulsion of the Kwangsi leaders from the party. The Congress empowered him to take the field against the rebels. Anxious to maintain a Central Government, which had won the approbation of international Imperialism, the bourgeoisie agreed to finance the campaign against the Kwangsi Group. The rebels evacuated Hankow, and withdrew to their base in the provinces of Hunan and Kwangsi. From there they could not be dislodged. Those rich provinces no longer owned even a nominal allegiance to the central authority.

The revolt of the Kwangsi Group was only the beginning. The campaign brought Nanking up against its own Minister of War, Feng Yu-hsiang. There was sufficient reason to believe that he had instigated the action of the rebels. On the pretext of sickness, he absented himself from the Party Congress. While the Congress was sitting, he sent in his resignation from the post of the Minister of War. Then, there followed a manifesto issued by the non-existing Kuo Min Tang organisations in the provinces controlled by him (Honan, Shensi and Kansu), sharply criticising the leadership of the party and declining to abide by the decisions of the Congress. The most remarkable feature of the manifesto was the demand for return of Wang Chin-wei to the leadership of the party. The feudal militarists were up in arms for resisting the plan of the bourgeoisie to create a centralised State as the organ of their dictatorial power. In that struggle for power, reactionary feudal militarism sought, and easily secured, the alliance (rather subservience) of the discredited petit-bourgeois elements in the Kuo Min Tang. The resistance to the creation of conditions necessary even for the capitalist development of China was to be organised under the soiled flag of Sun Yet-senism, and under the political leadership of his most orthodox disciple.

In action, Feng proved to be as dilatory as ever. Pretending

still to support the Nanking Government in its campaign against the Kwangsi rebels, he moved his troops towards Hankow, but did not move quickly enough. Chiang's troops captured the city. Elated by their unexpectedly easy victory, the bourgeoisie decided to push the fight further, hoping to demoralise feudal-militarist resistance by dealing swift blows. Feng was the next on the list. Having captured Hankow, Chiang Kai-shek declared his intention to continue "the punitive expedition until all the counter-revolutionary elements have been eliminated, and none remained to dispute the authority of the Central Government." As he did not show any inclination to push his way inside the territory of the Kwangsi rebels, it was obvious whom he wanted to strike next.

While Chiang Kai-shek had been conducting operations against the Kwangsi rebels, Feng marshalled his troops in battle-array along the Lunghai Railway, and blew up bridges to impede the progress of forces which might be sent to dislodge him from the strategic position. Generalissimo of the "united forces", Chiang demanded of Feng an explanation for his actions in moving troops without orders from the headquarters and for destroying national property. The demand for explanation was backed up by preparations of an attack upon Feng's army simultaneously from the south, east and north. His answer was another public declaration, signed by a number of his lieutenants.

In the declaration, Chiang Kai-shek was condemned for having destroyed the Kuo Min Tang for his personal ambition,*misappro-priated national funds, and assumed dictatorial power. The signatories to the declaration demanded Chiang's resignation, and urged their leader Feng to command a "punitive expedition" against the Com-mander-in-Chief of the National Army. Two days later Feng addressed a message to the diplomatic representatives of the foreign Powers, asking them to remain neutral in the struggle against "the illegal Nanking Government". That was an open declaration of war— a serious challenge to the pretension of the bourgeoisie to assume supreme power. The Nanking Government, of course, declared Feng Yu-hsiang a rebel, expelled him from the Kuo Min Tang, deprived him of all high offices, and ordered his arrest.

Feng was in a disadvantageous position, financially as well as militarily. The provinces under his control were very poor, devastated by civil war. Having no access to the sea, he could not easily get

sufficient supply for his troops. The Nanking army, on the contrary, was well equipped with arms supplied from abroad on credit, and it could still draw upon the financial sources of Shanghai. Nevertheless, Chiang Kai-shek did not hasten to take any serious military measures against the rebel. There began a puzzling period of secret negotiations, unscrupulous intrigues and hypocritical protestations. An actual clash of arms would completely burst the bubble of a central authority. Nanking could not possibly destroy Feng; at best he could be driven back into the western provinces, where he would certainly declare himself independent of the Nanking Government, would instigate the Kwangsi faction which still held the southern-western provinces, and even encourage Yen Hsi-shan to set up a rival National Government in Peking in conjunction with the Manchurian militarists. Thus, pushing its ambition too far, Nanking might altogether lose the position of the formally recognised central authority of the country. Its policy, therefore, was to make the best of the bad game, somehow to get out of the fray without losing face.

At first, a number of Feng's Gererals were bought off with bribes. Then, strenuous efforts were made to detach Yen Hsi-shan from his ally and neighour. But the affection of the "little-brother" proved to be surprisingly fast. He modestly received all his posts, honours, titles and, of course, the lucre, from the Nanking Government; but he was always very tardy to do his part, namely, to fight Feng. As a matter of fact, all the time he worked upon his cherished design of bringing about a new combination of the northern militarists with himself as the central figure. The comedy played by the crafty twins (Feng and Yen)—now "retiring hand in band" in some temple in the mountains; then, suffering from stomach-trouble; then again, Feng going to study abroad leaving the "little-brother" in charge of his forces and territories; and finally, both Tweedledum and Tweed-ledee going to see the world together—amused and puzzled the world for months. Re-establishment of the *status quo ante bellurn* eventually ended the drama. For a very substantial sum of money, Feng let Chiang have the empty glory of occupying Loyang, and withdrew his forces intact into the security of the western provinces, where he continued to rule supreme. The money received enabled him to re-equip his troops with the object of taking up the struggle in future.

The victory of the bourgeoisie was not only nominal, but very short-lived. At the end of 1928, they had appeared to be well estab-

lished in power. Hardly a year had passed, and the myth of national unification was gone. The country was again broken up into several practically independent regions. Political authority of the Nanking Government remained confined to the two provinces immediately adjacent to Shanghai. By far the larger part of the country was occupied by three main feudal-militarist combinations. They all defied the authority of the Nanking Government, although from time to time owing allegiance to it. The high-sounding plans of military disbandment, political centralisation, financial rehabilitation and economic reconstruction, to which the feudal lords imperturbedly added their signature, remained on paper. Instead of being reduced, the armed forces, sucking the life-blood of the country, actually swelled further in course of the new period of civil war. The year 1930 found the country split up into four armed camps, feverishy preparing to destroy one another, if not yet actually engaged in war.

The internal transit-tax had not been abolished. More than eighty per cent of the national revenue was still collected and spent locally, independent of any control by the titular Central Government. And there was no reason to believe that the situation would improve in the near future, unless the revolution recovered from defeat, to challenge the dictatorial ambition of the imbecile bourgeoisie as well as the power of feudal militarist reaction.

The apparent retreat of Feng Yu-hsiang before the shower of silver-bullets from Nanking by no means put an end to the state of civil war. There followed only a short period of armed truce. Even for that, the Nanking Government had to pay a very heavy price. The undisputed control of Peking and the adjacent provinces had to be conceded to Yen Hsi-shan for his neurality, that is, in order to induce him not to join openly his forces with the "elder brother" in the crusade against Nanking. In Manchuria, Chang Hsue-liang was encouraged in the adventure of provoking a conflict with the U.S.S.R. over the Chinese Eastern Railway, so that an all-inclusive Northern Alliance against Nanking might not be formed. Meanwhile, the situation in the southern provinces went from bad to worse. The Kwangsi rebels again raised their head, and the "Iron Army", which previously had contributed so much to the Nationalist victory, went over to them. The petit-bourgeois "left" Kuo Min Tang, led by Wang Chin-wei, joined the new anti-Nanking coalition. In the middle of 1929, when the Nanking Government was attacked on all sides, the petit-

bourgeois "left" leaders reappeared on the political horizon with a plan of reorganising the Kuo Min Tang on the principles of Sun Yat-sen. They claimed the Kwangsi feudal militarists and the rebellious "Iron Army" as their own; started secret negotiations with Feng Yu-hsiang and Yen Hsi-shan; and proposed either to set up a rival nationalist Government at Canton or support one in Peking, headed by Yen Hsi-shan.

The bankrupt petit-bourgeois politicians could consolidate the forces of counter-revolution no more successfully than the big bourgeoisie. The Nanking Government could survive repeated revolt of feudal militarists, not by virtue of any greater strength, but thanks to the lack of cohesion in the ranks of the rebels. They had only one thing in common, namely, the will to resist the plan of the bourgeoisie to build up a centralised State. But that one common interest was more than counter-balanced by mutual discord, suspicion and rivalry. The plan of the petit-bourgeois politicans to link up the feudal-militarist forces of dismemberment into a solid bloc against Nanking was, therefore, doomed to failure. The pompously begun campaign of the "reorganisationists" fizzled out very soon. The failure of the feudal militarists to unite in their resistance to Nanking enabled the latter to continue in a precarious existence. But the resistance itself did not cease. It went on, now from one side, then from another, effectively frustrating the plans of the Nanking Government, exposing the imbecility of the bourgeoisie, and proving that a modern capitalist State could not be established before the reactionary cumbrances of the past were ruthlessly destroyed. The disease was organic. It could not be cured by palliatives. It required a radical remedy which the bourgeoisie failed to apply.

Unable and unwilling to lead a revolutionary struggle for liquidating pre-capitalist social relations, the Chinese nationalist bourgeoisie could not even accomplish what was indispensable for the promotion of their own interest. Overthrow of feudalism is the condition for a free development of capitalism. But actually that revolutionary task is never accomplished by the bourgeoisie. That is done by the action of the peasantry. The bourgeoisie can snatch political power from the senile hands of feudal absolutism, when they support the revolutionary action of the peasant masses. There is no other way for the bourgeoisie to come to power. By turning against the peasantry, while they were going to deliver the death-blow to the

foundation of the feudal-militarist reaction, the Chinese nationalist bourgeoisie forfeited their claim to power. Had the rural democratic forces been allowed by the Nationalist Government to develop organs of local self-government, then, the frame-work of a centralised State would have been created throughout the country. In that case, the Nationalist Government would not be hanging in the air, depending for its very existence on mercenary troops financed and equipped with the grudging help of native bankers and damaging subsidy from foreign Imperialism. Then, it would have its roots struck deep in the social soil, and therefore would be able to carry out the unification of the country under a revolutionary democratic State. But the nationalist bourgeoisie of China would not travel the revolutionary way. Consequently, they were bound to find themselves in a blind-alley.

Nor could the "left" wing of the Kuo Min Tang, although it represented the more advanced section of the bourgeoisie, be expected to rescue the unfortunate country from the impasse. They also had supported the landlords against the rebellious peasantry, and endorsed the bloody suppression of the latter. Even now, though they pretended to disapprove of the bureaucratic dictatorship of Nanking, thly were outspoken in the hostility to the revolutionary action of the peasantry. They still stuck to paternalist principle of Sun Yat-sen, that the peasants should not confiscate the land, but wait patiently until the Nationalist Government would distribute it to them. Experience had shown that that could never happen. The Nationalist Government had no power to give the land to the peasantry, even if it wanted. The only thing it could do was to support the revolutionary action of the peasantry. The "left wing" nationalists refused to do that when they were in a favourable position. Therefore, the centralisation and democratisation of the country could not take place under their leadership. Still, they demagogically talked about capturing power for "transforming the existing system of military-feudalism into a sound socialist democracy".[5]

The dearly bought neutrality of Yen Hsi-shan, the bribed retreat of Feng Yu-hsiang, the decomposition of the Kwangsi clique, and the abject failure of the "left" wing to do anything effective—all these taken together did not help the Nanking Government very much. Its position remained as precarious as ever. New troubles broke out in December 1929. This time it was very dangerously near home,

seriously threatening the position of the fictitious central authority. Apart from Kiangsu and Chekiang, the practical jurisdiction of Nanking extended partially to the adjoining province of Anhwei. The governorship of that province had to be given to a lieutenant of Feng Yu-hsiang as the price for betraying his chief. The new revolt was led by that costly ally. It further revealed that Feng's craftiness knew no bounds. He had ordered his subordinate to betray him, so that he could acquire a high place inside the enemy's camp. Nanking, on its part, was not entirely blind to the stratagem of the foxy foe, and did not have much illusion about the new ally. So it ordered that the troops at the command of the new Governor of Anhwei should go down south for defending Canton against the attack from Kwangsi. It was an attempt to disarm the enemy who had smuggled himself into a strategic position. The camouflaged enemy was thus forced into premature action; that nevertheless, threatened to assume alarming proportions. Both the railways from Peking to the Yangtse Valley were occupied by the rebels who pushed their way down to Pukow, just across Nanking. In a few days the rebellion spread throughout the northern and central provinces, the "twin brothers" obviously pulling the strings behind the scene. The situation became so menacing that the nationalist Government was about to evacuate Nanking. At the eleventh hour, it was saved by Chiang Kai-shek declaring his intention to resign. Ostensibly, he was the target of all attacks.

The crisis, however, was again overcome by other, more potential, means. Three factors were brought to bear upon the situation. Bribery decomposed the enemy camp which never had a principle in common. Dozens of Generals actually were bandits, going over from this side to that with bewildering nimbleness. They were out in the market for selling their questionable adhesion to the highest bidder. Secondly, in order to hold his base of operation at all cost, Chiang Kai-shek withdrew all his forces from the south and threw them on the northern front. That move left Canton at the mercy of the Kwangsi rebels; but Nanking was saved. To hold Nanking was of supreme importance; its loss would mean the death of the Nationalist Government, even as a fiction. Finally, the third factor, which really saved Nanking, was the foreign fleet. As soon as Pukow was occupied by the insurgents, foreign battleships appeared on the Yangtse which must be crossed before Nanking could be taken. Afraid of getting embroiled into a conflict with the foreign

Powers, the rebels did not attempt to cross the river; thus, Chiang Kai-shek had the time for bringing up his reserves from the south.

Behind all these partial revolts and local skirmishes, the stage was being set for the grand finale. On the settlement of the conflict with the U.S.S.R. over the Chinese Eastern Railway, the Manchurian War-Lord again became an active factor in the situation. A northern military alliance against Nanking was again formed by the beginning of 1930. Presently, the original plan of the usual military action was given a definite political complexion. The new plan was to set up a rival Government in Peking with Wang Chin-wei as the civil head, and supported by the three northern war-lords. If such a Government came into being, it would control at least temporarily territories much larger than under the jurisdiction of Nanking, with as much apparent authority as the latter possessed in its domain. In that case, Sun Yat-senism, that is, counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie nationalism, would be back in its spiritual home—the mandarindom of patriarchal Peking: the standard-bearer of pure Sun Yat-senism heading a mandarin-militarist Government! That would be the last and conclusive evidence of the utter inability of the bourgeoisie to build up a new China out of the stinking ruins of the old. Another result of the establishment of a rival Government in Peking would be re-opening of the whole question of foreign relations. The imperialist Powers accorded diplomatic recognition to the Nanking Government, because for the time there was no other serious rival for the distinction. The appearance of a Government in Peking with Wang Chin-wei as its head would give them a plausible pretext to reconsider their decision about the object of their patronage.

It was not an accident that the Chinese bourgeoisie, from the very beginning of their struggle for power, in one way or another, counted upon foreign support. The Reform Movement at the end of the last century expected that the "democratic Powers" of the West would help it in the fight against monarchist absolutism, and was bitterly disappointed to find the expected help given to the decrepit old regime. Sun Yat-sen's scheme for building up a modern China with the aid of "foreign capital and technical experts" was a monument to the inability of the Chinese bourgeoisie to work out the salvation even of their own class. Previously, monarchist absolutism could survive powerful popular upheavals as long as it was favoured with foreign support; later on, the very existence of bourgeois counter-

revolution was conditional upon the assistance of international Imperialism. When the nationalist bourgeoisie turned against the democratic revolution, foreign Imperialism benevolently approved of their bloody deeds, and held out the temptation of financial assistance to their efforts for bringing order out of chaos through the establishment of a counter-revolutionary dictatorship. Not only did the Nanking Government propose to execute its bombastic Reconstruction Plan with the aid of foreign capital, the rival group of the bourgeoisie, represented by the left wing," would also do exactly the same.

While, in the middle of 1929, the "reorganisationists", in alliance with the feudal-militarist Kwangsi clique, were planning the establishment of a rival Nationalist Government at Canton, their leader, Wang Chin-wei, outlined his programme in a special interview to the "Daily Herald" of London. Regarding the question of foreign relations, he made the following very significant statement: "While carrying out our policy of national independence, we shall restore friendly relations with all nations. In this, we hope to have the sympathy of the best elements among the British people." At the end of 1929, when the fall of the Nanking Government appeared to be imminent, the official representative in Europe of the "left" Kuo Min Tang made the following statement regarding the foreign policy of the prospective Government to be set up by his group: "In foreign affairs, the Left is of course committed to the policy of recovering all China's lost privileges and sovereign rights. But it hopes to carry this out in an atmosphere of peace and amity and not by arbitrary seizure. To attain this aim, a close cooperation between China and Great Britain is essential."[6] The anxiety even of the "left" nationalist leaders to enlist the friendship of England showed that the struggle for power among the various groups of the Chinese ruling class took place on the background of, and was closely connected with, the struggle for supremacy among the imperialist Powers.

If the reconstruction of China was to be realised with the aid of foreign capital, the domination automatically would pass to America. The huge amount of capital[7] required for the purpose could at that time be supplied only from the Wall Street. Therefore, ever since its foundation, the foreign policy of the Nanking Government was orientated towards America. That naturally alarmed the British. They would also welcome the rise of a central authority in China. But if

degree, they were the masters of the situation in their country. They failed to do that, and there seemed to be little chance of their succeeding in the future. It was a vicious circle; the only way out was a revolution which might destroy the bourgeoisie together with all the remnants of the past obstructing the realisation of their ambition.

Instead of being an organ of power, the Nanking Government became a dead-weight around the neck of the nationalist bourgeoisie. They had sunk so much money in it that they were all along obliged to put in more, so that everything was not irrecoverably lost. They staked their fortune on a horse which appeared to run madly, but never came in sight of victory. But, for that wild speculation, they could not get the foreign aid on which they counted. Very little American capital actually came to China. The nationalist bourgeoisie began to complain that "there is much diplomacy, but little investment". They were rather resentful that the Americans were not in a hurry to help them thrive upon the dead body of the revolution. "American citizens have about thirty-nine outstanding contracts with the Chinese Government. Most of them are only on parchment. . . . If the Americans had availed themselves of the opportunity offered to them and had rendered the contracts into steel rails, sleepers, and freight-cars, they would have secured numerous practical trade, financial and other advantages"[9] Thus wrote a nationalist economic expert.

But the opulent Uncle Sam would not so naively walk into the parlour of John Chinaman, until and unless the latter set his house in such an order as would give sufficient guerantee for his investments. The Wall Street magnate, Lament, had held out great temptations to the Chinese bourgeoisie when these were revelling in the gore of the revolutionary workers and peasants. A year and a half later, he spoke in a different tone. In the Congress of the International Chamber of Commerce, held at Amsterdam in July 1920, Lament said: "I warn the Chinese friends that their credit is at a low ebb, and that American or European loans are not to be thought of until financial and political stability is re-established in their country."

Thus were the Chinese nationalist bourgeoisie left in the lurch by their international patrons, after they had betrayed the revolution. Their struggle for power was a forlorn battle. They must drag on their precarious existence until the revolution arrested by them recovers from the defeat, and mercilessly buries the ugly ghost of Father

Confucius, not to enshrine Uncle Sam in his place, but to lay the foundation of a really free China striding forward in the path of progress with the epoch-making conquests of man at her disposal. History having doomed the bourgeoisie to an incorrigible imbecility, the future of China belongs to the toiling masses. Her rehabilitation will begin only when the latter capture power to employ modern machines for her rapid economic transformation; not for private

profit, but for the common benefit of her teeming millions.[10]

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In June 1930, the united forces of Feng Yu-hsiang and Yen Hsi-shan revolted against the Nanking Government. At the same time, Changsha, capital of the province of Hunan, was occupied by the revolutionary army from the South. On both the fronts, Nanking troops were driven back. In the North, Yen Hsr-shan captured Tientsin; on the other hand, Hankow was seriously threatened from the South. In that critical moment, Wang Chin-wei appeared in Peking with the plan of uniting the Kuo Min Tang as a partner in the North Coalition against Nanking. The plan included: (1) Convening of a National Assembly, composed of representatives from all classes and professions; (2) Drafting of a Constitution to be submitted to the National Assembly (the principles of Sun Yat-sen should be the foundation of the proposed Constitution); (3) Establishment of the organs of local self-government supported by the masses, but the Communists should be prohibited from sharpening class antagonism; (4) Creation of a government subordinated to the control of the party which, in its turn, should not directly interfere in political matters; (5) Union of all the available talents in the projected government; and (6) Maintenance of a balance between local and central powers, instead of centralisation.

It should be noticed that the National Assembly proposed by Wang Chin-wei very closely resembled the City Council established at Shanghai in the beginning of 1927. During its resurgence in the year 1929, the peasant movement created a similar type of local self-governing institutions. Sun Yat-sen's scheme of a paternal dictatorship was challenged by a powerful wave of revolutionary democracy. Therefore, the standard-bearer of "pure Sun Yat-senism" undertook efforts to bring the local organs of democratic power, created in the midst of a revolutionary mass struggle, under the domination of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie.

Ordinarily, parliamentary democracy is the organ of domination of the bourgeoisie. But under special circumstances, during a revolutionary crisis for instance, the bourgeoisie may wield power through different forms of popular representation. During the German Revolution of 1918, and even the March Revolution in Russia, the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils were misused as instruments of bourgeoisie democracy. Similarly, in China the "Soviets", created in the midst of a peasant insurrection, could be the means for the bourgeoisie to exercise power. By their social composition, those "Soviets" were not organs of proletarian dictatorship; they were revolutionary democratic bodies. In China a centralised State could arise only as the federation of such "Soviets" created throughout the country. The social character of the centralised State would be determined by the class under whose leadership the federation might come into being.

The local organs of power spontaneously grew out of the struggle of the peasantry. They were named "Soviets" by the Communists who participated in the process of their creation. But they did not rise under the leadership of the proletariat which had not yet recovered from the staggering defeat of 1927. The proletariat could lead the agrarian revolution as an integral part of its own struggle for power; but there was no indication of the Chinese proletariat having resumed that struggle. As a matter of fact, the bitter experience and costly experiment, during the years 1928 and 1929, raised the question whether the proletariat could alone take up the leadership of the still to be accomplished democratic revolution. The revolutionary peasant movement was of a spontaneous nature and, therefore, could be the foundation for bourgeoisie democracy, if the conditions in China were not so unfavourable otherwise. If the bourgeoisie seriously advocated the convening of a National Assembly, as suggested by Wang Chin-wei, then they could greatly influence the democratic uprising of the rural masses.

Another point in Wang Chin-wei's programme shows that he was casting wistful glances towards the countryside. The plan to create organs of local self-government with the support of the masses represented the wish to take the "Soviet;" under the paternal protection of "pure Sun Yat-senisin". But that desire must remain unfulfilled owing to the peculiar conditions of the country. The peasant masses were in the midst of an agrarian revolution which had assumed gigantic proportions, notwithstanding the resistance of the bourgeoisie.

view of the serious revolutionary danger it was advisable to postpone the establishment of a rival National Government in Peking, so that all the forces could be united against Communism.

Alarmed equally by the rising tide of peasant revolt, both the rival cliques of Nanking and Peking simultaneously courted for the favour of the Manchurian War-Lord Chang Hsue-liang. The latter in his turn, must obey the instructions of Japanese Imperialist. In the beginning of September (1930), he suddenly set large masses of troops in motion towards Peking, The Nothern Alliance regarded that as an action in its support, and proclaimed the establishment of a new government in Peking. Naturally, an outstanding place in the new government was reserved for the Manchurian War-Lord. Yen Hsi-shan, Feng Yu-hsiang and Wang Chin-wei became the President, Commander-in-Chief and Prime Minister respectively. However Japanese Imperialism must have had reason to keep its protege still out of the game. To the great surprise of Wang Chin-wei, one of the "talents", Chang Hsue-liang, crowned by him, unexpectedly declared his loyalty for the opposite camp. Having failed to secure financial assistance either from Britain or from America, Chiang Kai-shek had entered into secret negotiations with Japan, offering it tempting concessions.

The defection of the Manchurian ruler made the position of the Peking Government untenable. The forces arrayed against it were powerful. It could not possibly hold its own against simultaneous attacks from the North and the South. Only a few days after its pompous formation, it collapsed. Once again, Wang Chin-wei went abroad, a defeated, disappointed and discredited man.

Soon it came to be known that Nanking had won over not only the Manchurian War-Lord, but also Feng-Yu-hsiang, who was the real creator of the North Coalition. His troops suddenly began to withdraw westwards, presumably under a shower of silver-bullets from the enemy's lines. Without the slightest scruple, he turned against his erstwhile ally, Yen Hsi-shan, who evacuated Tientsin and Peking in a hurry. The agreement between Nanking and Mukden was celebrated by the installation of Chang Hsue-liang as the Vice-Commander-in-Chief of the Nationalist Army—a place of honour until then occupied by Yen Hsi-shan. It was, however, possible for Feng to lead his forces back intact to his base in the Western provinces which still remained the undisputed domain of the defeated

"Christian General."

The rapid disruption of the Northern Alliance was celebrated in Nanking as yet another long step towards the unity and liberation of the country under its domination. In reality, however, the country still remained broken up into independent regions, for all practical purposes hostile to any central authority. Apart from the Manchurian provinces, an extensive area (about six provinces) remained under the domination of the Kwangsi Group; then, there were the Far-Western provinces under Fen's suzerainty.

Moreover, the latest victory did not overcome the crisis inside the Nanking Group; on the contrary, it was sharpened. That was evidenced by the declaration of T.V. Soong who desired to retire from the post of Finance Minister of the Nanking Government. He was the recognised representative of the Chinese bankers of Shanghai who until then had supplied the Exchequer of Nanking. Therefore, Soong's declaration did not signify anything less menacing than a financial blockade. The bourgeoisie began to doubt whether the money advanced to Nanking Government was a profitable investment. Realistically enough, they seemed to admit the impossibility of ever uniting a considerable portion of the country, not to speak of the entire country, under a government dominated by themselves. That attitude of the bourgeoisie drove Chiang Kai-shek still nearer to the Manchurian clique under the protectorate of Japanese Imperialism. As the price for the prospective alliance, Chang Hsue-liang demanded that the Finance Ministry of Nanking should be given to one of his nominees. On the other hand, the Chinese bankers of Shanghai got tired of the expensive luxury of Chiang's military dictatorship, and encouraged the man of their confidence, T.V. Soong, who resigned from the Finance Ministry with the object of capturing the higher power—for replacing Chiang Kai-shek as the head of the Nanking Government.

That drove Chiang definitely into the arms of Japanese Imperialism. It seems that, in agreement with the Nanking clique, also encouraged by the Anglo-American policy of encircling the U.S.S.R. with a *cordon sanitaire,* Japanese Imperialism decided to annex Manchuria, instead of continuing to rule there through Chang Hsue-liang. Having conquered the Manchurian provinces in 1931, Japanese Imperialism invaded Shanghai. There was no resistance 'to the invaders. The Nanking Government adopted the policy of "non-

resistance". It had to pay heavily for securing the Japanese support for the crusade against Communism, on which pretext the nationalist militarists tried to crush the forces of democratic revolution during the years 1930 to 1934.

Notes

1. *The China Year Book,* 1928.

2. *Despatch of the Kuo Min News Agency,* Nanking, September *16,* 1927.

3. *The China Weekly Review* (New China Edition), October 20, 1928.

4. T.V. Soong's speech at the Shanghai National Economic Conference, June, 1929.

5. Tang Liang-li, "The Foundations of Modern China".

6. *The Daily Herald,* London, December 7, 1929.

7. It was estimated that the execution of the nationalist plans of reconstruction might easily absorb one thousand million dollars in rive years.

8. In those days, Britain had very little surplus capital to export.

9. B.H. Tan, *The China Weekly Review,* (New China Edition), Oct. 10, 1928.

10. The book, written in the earlier part of 1930, finished at this point. Events happening while it was in the press are recorded in the latter part of the chapter. Chapters XXII and XXIII added in 1939 for this edition, gives a general survey of the developments in the intervening period, particularly with the purpose of pointing out that criticism and prophesies made ten years ago have been born out by subsequent events.—*Author*

CHAPTER XXII

AN EXPERIMENT

By the end of 1931, the bankruptcy of the Nanking Government was complete. The counter-revolution had not only failed to unite the country under a military dictatorship, but had exposed its weakness so as to encourage Japanese Imperialism to launch upon a plan of large-scale territorial expansion. Continuous civil war having discouraged Anglo-American Imperialism to extend the promised financial support to the Nanking Government, the field was clear for Japanese Imperialism. Knowing that China had no power to resist, and given to understand that it was free to act against the Soviet Union, Japanese Imperialism began the formal conquest of Manchuria in 1931. In 1932 Shanghai was invaded. The heroic resistance put up by the Nineteenth Route Army was overwhelmed by superior forces. The Nanking Government signed an agreement dictated by Japanese Imperialism. Neither in Shanghai nor in the North did Japanese invasion meet any resistance from the nationalists. On the contrary, their energy was devoted to the suppression of all spontaneous resistance to foreign invasion.

The Nanking Government adopted the humiliating policy of '"non-resistance" to Japanese invasion, because it was gathering all its forces to combat the danger of peasant revolt. The forces of revolution, defeated in 1927, and seriously decimated by the bloody terror which raged throughout the year 1928, showed signs of recovery. Having failed to unite the country under a counter-revolutionary dictatorship, and utterly impotent in the face of Japanese invasion, the nationalists again raised the bogey of Communism and plunged the country in a bloody civil war which ravaged it for several years. During that time, Japanese Imperialism pushed ahead with its plans °f annexation, and by 1935 conquered the whole of Manchuria and

established its domination over a considerable portion of the northern provinces around Peking.

The experience of the short period (1925-27) of revolutionary mass mobilisation had encouraged the more courageous among the destitute peasantry to act on their own initiative instead of enlisting themselves as soldiers in the mercenary armies of the feudal-militarists particularly those who had been partially armed during the revolutionary days of the summer of 1927, and survived the reign of terror in the following year by fleeing to the inaccessible mountainous regions, where they necessarily took to banditry. That sort of banditry was not unprecedented in the history of China. It was guerilla operation on the part of destitute peasantry against the social order which made no room for them to exist on productive labour. Destitute peasantry in open revolt against the established socio-political order was the social basis of the Taiping Rebellion. The tradition of the most outstanding event in the history of modern China was still alive, particularly in the central provinces which were the scene of that great revolutionary movement. Those parts again became the scene of an armed peasant uprising. The peasant guerilla bands were reinforced by two other factors.

During the years of revolutionary upheaval, the nationalist armies could not remain altogether immune from the dangerous ferment. When they were employed for suppressing the peasant revolt, some detachments, particularly those under Communist or radically minded youthful nationalist commanders, revolted. But unable to resist the fierce attack of the great bulk of mercenary troops, they also withdrew to the mountainous regions, there to join hands with the armed peasant bands. The third factor was the Communists who, either individually or in small bands, escaped the bloody vengeance of counter-revolution after the disastrous defeat at the end of 1927. All those three factors, together representing the defeated and dispersed forces of revolution, went into the making of the so-called "Red Armies".

Much romantic and lyrical literature has been produced about the heroic feats of the "Red Armies" and the achievements of the Chinese "Soviets". The experiment, begun in 1929, has ended. The history of the Chinese Soviets and Red Armies is certainly a record of great heroism. But the accomplishments of a revolutionary movement are to be judged by other standards. It was a very costly

experiment. It will be justified, if only its lessons will be helpful for the future development of the Chinese Revolution. For the purpose of learning the lesson, the history of the experiment must by critically recorded.

The concentration of the remnants of the defeated and scattered forces of revolution took place almost exactly in the regions which had been the birth-place also of the Taiping movement. It was the mountainous country on the border of the provinces of Hunan and Kiangsi. In the former, the peasant movement had developed the greatest striking power in 1927. Therefore, it could not be altogether crushed.

The chairman of the Federation of Peasant Unions, Mao Tse-tung, in the critical days of 1927, represented the extreme right-wing view in the leadership of the Communist Party. He had gone to Hunan with the object of "checking the excesses" of the Peasants Unions. But in the following days of fierce attack on the insurgent peasantry, and during the subsequent reign of terror, counter-revolution would not show any mercy even to the blundering Communist leaders but for whose fatal mistakes the forces of revolution might have come victorious out of the crisis. It seems that, in the eleventh hour, Mao Tse-tung had no other alternative than to place himself at the head of some armed peasant band, and withdraw to the mountainous country to be beyond the reach of the fury of triumphant counterrevolution. There, his band was gradually joined by other groups of fleeing armed peasantry and also by detachments of troops deserting the Nationalist Armies. Finally arrived a small group of Communists at the head of an army of two thousand men. It was commanded by Chu Teh.

After the tragedy of the Canton Uprising, Chu Teh had led the troops loyal to the Communists to the eastern part of Kwangtung, and had established a temporary base at Hailufeng. But before long, the Communists were driven out from there by the counter-revolutionary troops from Canton. Thereupon, Chu Teh performed his first remarkable military feat. At the head of a handful of troops, he cut across the whole province of Kiangsi infested with the armed forces of Chiang Kai-shek wreaking vengeance on the peasant masses. But even that great courage could not perform a miracle, The small Communist army could not capture any place in order to create a new base of operation. The experience showed that the peasantry

were thoroughly demoralised, and it was for the moment impossible to mobilise them into a new offensive action. Finally, having fought its way through the forces of counter-revolution, Chu Teh's small army reached the mountainous fastness where other remnants of the defeated forces of revolution had found a temporary refuge. There, the "Red Army" was constituted in April 1928 under the command of Chu Teh. Mao Tse-tung became the political leader. The headquarter of the Red Army was established in a small place called Chingkingshan. According to a report subsequently published by the Communist Party, the Army was composed of ten thousand men, nearly a quarter of whom were armed with rifles.[1] The great bulk of the "Red Army" seems to have been composed of local "bandits". Its revolutionary nucleus was composed of less than two thousand men led by Chu Teh from Kwangtung. That was the remnant of the armies commanded by Yeh Ting and Ho Lung which had revolted against Nationalist Government, at Nanchang in August 1927. During the intervening nine months, the armed forces commanded by the Communists had been destroyed almost completely.

The first disagreeable experience of the Red Army was the demoralisation of the peasantry in the surrounding districts. Making occasional sorties from its headquarters in the mountainous fastness, the Red Army captured larger or smaller areas of the adjoining territories. There, revolutionary peasant committees were set up to function as the local government. Since the peasants were too discouraged and demoralised to become active soldiers of the revolution, the Red Army scarcely grew numerically. In order to bring additional territories under its control, detachments of the Red Army had to move on after setting up revolutionary peasant commitees in the already occupied territories. But as a rule, as soon as they moved on, the peasant committees collapsed. The result was that the line of communication between the detachments of the Red Army in operation and its base was often at the mercy of the enemy. Under such circumstances, extensive operations became impossible, and the power of the newly created revolutionary centre remained

confined to a small district immediately adjacent to the base of the Red Army.

On the other hand, the rural reaction in the surrounding country was on the alert and received reinforcements from the Provincial Government. The Red Army consequently found itself practically

besieged. While offering valuable possibilities for defense, the mountainous vastness at the same time proved to be a disadvantage. Necessary supplies were not available on the spot. Gradually, it became a very risky affair to forage for them in the surrounding districts which were already being protected by troops sent by the Provincial Government. Before long winter set in. Confronted with starvation and the hardships of severe cold, guerilla bands composed of destitute peasantry from the neghbouring territories began to melt away. The peasants would rather risk a return home than undergo privations and hardships which could be defied only by firm revolutionary conviction.

By the end of the year, the base at Chingkingshan became utterly untenable. If sure destruction was to be avoided, another supremely heroic effort must be made to lead the revolutionary nucleus out of the besieged mountainous place in search of a better base. A few thousand starving and freezing, ill-armed and ill-clad men marched southwards, led by Chu Teh and Mao Tse-tung. They were to make even more bitter experience. "The masses completely failed to understand what the Red Army was. In many places, it was even attacked like a bandit gang. The Red Army had no support from the masses. There were great difficulties in finding encampments, carrying on military operations, and securing information. We marched across snow-covered and icy mountains, closely pursued by the enemy. We sometimes covered ninety *li** in a single day. Our sufferings increased. We ʷere defeated in battle four times."[3]

Finally, a veritable miracle happened. In the middle of February 1929, when after several week's desperate march as described above, there appeared to be no hope left for the brave band, it suddenly came upon a whole division of Government troops. That was in a valley in the southern part of the province of Kiangsi. One of the most heroic deeds of the whole period of adventure was committed. It was heroism of despair. During the march, the Red Army had several times adroitly avoided a conflict with Government troops. This time an entirely different tactic was adopted. The enemy was attacked with a desperate fury. Taken completely unawares, he could not put up any effective resistance. The red troops had some rifles, but very little ammunition. They are reported to have attacked with stones and branches ʳof trees, and used empty" rifles as sticks.

That unexpected victory gave the Red Army the direly needed respite. It settled down to create the new base on the very spot, and presently captured Juichin and Ningtu, two small towns in the neighbourhood. At that time, the Red Army counted less than three thousand men. But in the new base it found the peasantry somewhat more responsive. Before long a sufficiently large-area was brought under its control. The landlords were driven away. The land was distributed to the peasantry. The new territory was called "The Central Soviet District".

Remnants of the defeated forces of revolution bed been operating in a similar way in several other places in distant parts of the country. A band of armed peasantry, commanded by the Communist Fang Chih min, was carrying on guerilla operations in the northeastern parts of Kiangsi, right across the province from the place where the Central Soviet District was situated. The legendary Ho Lung had reappeared in Hupeh to conduct lightning attacks and forced marches which made him famous. In the mountainous region at the junction of the boundaries of Honan, Anhwei and Hunan, another "Red Army" had been formed. Small territories, occupied by irregular armies, operating in distant parts of the country, without any centralised command, were called "Soviet China." The new base, created by Chu Teh and Mao Tse-tung, claimed to be its central authority.

Although it functioned nominally under the leadership of the Coumunist Party, the latter as an organised force had been practically eliminated after the final defeat at Canton and subsequent reign of terror. Formally, the headquarter of the party was situated underground in Shanghai, from where there could possibly be no standing contact with the armed bands operating in distant parts of the country. It appears from old party records that in the beginning the official party leadership did not approve of the military activities conducted formally in the name of the party. As a matter of fact, the guerilla activities were condemned by the official party leadership. In a letter addressed to all members of the party, the leaders marooned in Shanghai warned: "If the danger of peasant psychology is not vigorously corrected, the revolution will be liquidated entirely, and the party will die."[4] The warning was entirely theoretical. It was based on the assumption of the Communist Party, as the party of the proletariat, should live in order to save the revolution. But the perspective

of the situation was determined not by theoretical assumptions, but by actual events. Instead of condemning "peasant psychology" as a danger, it was necessary to analyse the new phenomenon and find out its cause. It was highly significant that, after the defeat, any revolutionary activity was possible only among the peasantry. Instead of determining the strategy and tactics for the future in the light of that significant fact, the leadership of the Communist Party, in the beginning, tended to dissociate itself from the only element which could still be mobilised in revolutionary action.

The Sixth Congress of the Communist Party of China, held at the end of 1928, far away in Moscow, condemned the activities of the Red Armies as "aimless plundering and burning" and characterised them as "the reflection of lumpen proletarian psychology."[5] Another official report of the party described the guerilla bands as "red bandits, burning, killing and robbing", and deplored the "bandit pschology, degeneration into a bandit existence of killing and plundering."[6] Even as late as in the beginning of 1930, the Central Committee of the party complained that "in many of the partisan bands, lumpen proletarian ideas persist, often expressing themselves in unorganised burning, plundering and killing."[7]

The description in those reports was not very incorrect. But an entirely different lesson should have been drawn from those facts. The elements available for the creation of a revolutionary army did not provide the social basis either for a Soviet Republic or for a Red Army. Nevertheless, the "pure proletarian" disdain for those ugly realities only revealed inability to grasp the actual problems of the situation. The revolution was still bourgeois-democratic. Therefore, the peasantry was still the basic revolutionary factor. But the fighting forces even of a purely peasant uprising are not supplied by the well-to-do peasantry; they corre always and almost exclusively from the poorer strata which are often destitute and pauperised, and therefore driven to "banditry, plundering and killing".

The failure to appreciate correctly the revolutionary possibilities of the given situation led to ruinous adventures of the so-called "Li Li-san Line". The belated offensive, after the defeat in 1927, had begun with the slogan of proletarian dictatorship. The tragedy of Canton did not teach any lesson. The destruction of the Communist Party in the urban areas and the radical change in the socia

composition of its memberships also went unnoticed. The Communist leaders still believed that, having betrayed the revolution, the bourgeoisie had changed its social character, and China had entered the stage of proletarian revolution, and the establishment of Socialism was the immediate task before her. If the urban workers happened to be too demoralised by the defeat to take up any revolutionary action, the peasantry might be allowed to take the initiative, but the revolution begun in the villages must be imported to the cities, with the object of establishing proletarian dictatorship!

"The Soviets established in the Chinese territories occupied by Red Armies can establish connection with the big industrial centres, and under the leadership of the Communist Party establish a Soviet Government of Workers and Peasants. The revolution is in a critical stage. The proletariat will not lead the peasantry; the latter will bring the revolution to the cities."[8] Characterising the formation and operation of armed peasant bands as "the peculiarity of a new revolutionary upsurge", a resolution of the Executive Committee of the Communist International declared the following: In the initial stage, there is a certain weakness, namely, the fighting masses cannot at the very beginning occupy the industrial centres. Only in the process of the further development of the revolutionary struggle, can the peasant war, led by the proletariat, expand to new territory. In the future, according to political and military circumstances, one or several political or industrial centres can be occupied".[9]

Nearly a year ago, the Executive of the Communist International had directed the Communist Party of China to "overthrow the power of the landlord-bourgeois bloc, to establish a workers' and peasants' dictatorship, to unfold mass political strikes and demonstrations, to expand the partisan warfare, and to turn the militarist war into a class civil war".[10] In the meantime, experience had shown that the policy contained in the above direction could not be executed. Heavily defeated and completely demoralised, the urban workers would not respond to repeated calls for "mass political strikes and demonstrations". Yet, acting upon the direction reaffirmed by the subsequent resolution of the Political Secretariat of the Communist International, the Communist Party of China, under the leadership of Li Li-san, in the middle of 1930, launched upon an adventurous policy. "The aim of the local uprisings is to capture local cities. The perspective must inevitably be to converge upon the central cities

to accomplish the victory of the insurrection in the whole country".[11] The Red Armies received orders to march on the cities. Li Li-san is reported to have undertaken to mobilise a hundred million people within three days. The resolution quoted above issued the call: "The time for insurrection has come! Organise yourself!" According to the call, a "Red Guard" was formed in Shanghai, as preparatory to the fourth uprising. "One hundred and seventy-six workers could be induced to enlist!"[12]

The Utopian adventure of the "Li Li-san Line" ran wild in the opportunity afforded by the outbreak of a new civil war between the two hostile nationalist camps. In June 1930, the united forces of Feng Yu-hsiang and Yen Hsi-shan revolted against the Nanking Government. There was a plan of setting up a rival Government in Peking with Wang Chin-wei as its head. While the "North Coalition" was being formed against Nanking, "the country found itself on the eve of a revolutionary crisis. It is evident that over large areas the peasantry is driven by their terrible conditions of life to revolt, and out of despair is conducting a sort of war against the Government officials and landlords. The peasant movement has no source of strength, on the basis of which it could march forward; therefore a strong Government can easily suppress it. Nevertheless, if the Provincial Governments remain interchangeably in the hands of rival militarists, then, the workers' and peasants' movement can acquire irresistible powers."[13]

Taking advantage of that crisis in the camp of counter-revolution, the Communists decided to regain their position in the cities. The Fifth Red Army, commanded by the Communist Peng Teh-huai, marched westward from the "Central Soviet District" and occupied Changsha, the capital of Hunan, on July 28, 1930. The plan of the Communists was to capture Wuhan and set up the Central Soviet Government there. But the plan miscarried, showing that it had been based on a woefully wrong calculation. The march of the Fifth Army through Kiangsi and the easy occupation of Changsha were due to the fact that practically all the Government troops had been withdrawn for the campaign in the North. Once iu Changsha, the Red Army was confronted with a very difficult situation. Contrary to expectation, the urban democratic masses did not rise up in revolt and join the revolutionary army. Consequently, the city could not be held even for a few days. It was recovered by the Government troops

on August 1. Of course, forces of Imperialism promptly intervened and helped the counter-revolutionaries to recover the city. American British, Japanese and Italian gun-boats were rushed up the Siang River, and bombarded the city. Unable to hold the city without support of the masses, the Red Army withdrew with a booty of nearly a million dollars.

The peasants could attack and even defeat the forces of reaction in the countryside. In limited areas they could set up a sort of democratic administration. But in big cities they were helpless. They could occupy them for a short time, plunder and destroy them but they could never take over political power there. A revolutionary regime could be set up in the cities only by the urban democratic masses. In Changsha, they were not prepared for such an action They lacked the will and the organisation to take up the struggle for the capture of power, even when armed forces were available for the purpose.

"There was insufficient connection between the attack of the Red Army and the mass struggles in Changsha".[11] Later on in course of a discussion of the "Li Li-san Line", the following facts were revealed. "In Changsha, there was no mass Soviet elected by factories or streets. Red flags were torn down all over the city A mass meeting was called, but only three thousand people attended Another effort two days later was not any more successful. The army was impregnated with the fundamental strategy of the peasant partisan. Its position was not consolidated. No city power was organised".[15] During the occupation of the city, about two thousand workers had been recruited in the army. They went away with the main army when the latter evacuated the city. So, instead of carrying the revolution to the city, the latter was deprived of its best revolutionary elements. Consequently, after it was recaptured by the counter-revolutionaries, the population was subjected to unrestricted terror. The urban masses were suspected of having sympathised with the revolutionary army, and were slaughtered in thousands Heaps of corpses blocked the streets. .The mad fury abated only when order came from Nanking on the appeal of the local Chamber of Commerce An extraordinary tax was levied for refunding to the Chamber of Commerce the million dollars taken away by the Red Army

Detachments of insurgent peasantry also appeared in the neighbourhood of big cities like Hankow and Nanchang. But they, being

better garrisoned than Changsha, could not be captured. There also the working class remained passive, and the democratic masses were completely demoralised. An effort to organise a strike on the Peking-Hankow Railway failed. When efforts were made to establish the capital of the Central Soviet Government in Wuhan, the Communist Party in that industrial centre did not have more than two-hundred members and the trade-unions had a membership of hundred and fifty.[16] Nevertheless, attempts to capture the cities continued throughout the summer, and ended only in provoking a recrudescence of counter-revolutionary terror in the urban area. In September another effort was made to occupy Changsha, but it failed. Finally in October, an important city in Kiangsi, Kian, was captured. It was held longer than Changsha, but was evacuated after a few weeks. Here also the same experience was made. "Organisation of the masses was completely ignored, and the leaders of the Red Army were concerned only with recruiting new soldiers."[17] From Kian a part of the army was despatched to attack the provincial capital Nanchang and another important city, Kiukiang. They were repulsed.

Those costly experiences showed the adventurous nature of the Li Li-sen Line, which, after all, was the application of a policy formulated by the Communist International. However, it was realised that urban areas could not be captured by the "Red Armies." The policy was given a new orientation. In a letter to the Communist Party of China in November 1930, the Executive Committee of the Communist International directed that it was now necessary "to concentrate the best forces of the party for creating a real workers' and peasants' Red Army", and suggested that a Central Soviet Government should be established in one of the existing Soviet districts as the basis for future expansion.

By way of drawing lessons from the recent experiments, it was admitted that "the Central Committee has had some mechanical conceptions, thinking that the Central Soviet Government had to be established in Wuhan, or at least in Changsha or Nanchang". Having expressed the Utopian desire that "it would be better to get established in the bigger cities than in the smaller ones", the outstanding disparity of revolutionary development in the rural and urban areas was simply dismissed as "a secondary question". Then, the following declaration was made: "We must consolidate the present scattered Soviet Districts, weld them together, strengthen and centra-

lise the leadership of the Red Armies, set broader peasant masses in motion, and establish a Central Soviet Government to develop towards the industrial cities".[18]

Although the party leader, Li Li-san, was rebuked for having "overestimated the tempo", and committed "isolated tactical mistakes", the disastrous line associated with his name was still declared to have been "in complete harmony with the Comintern".[19] However, the tactics of indiscriminate armed uprisings, and the policy of setting up Soviet Governments in cities without the least support from the democratic masses had proved to be so disastrous that it had to be completely discarded. That was done on the direction of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, received in November 1930. In a meeting of the Central Committee of the party, the old leaders were removed, and the party was given a completely new leadership. The new policy was to leave the urban areas alone and to organise the insurgent peasantry into a powerful armed force of the revolution. The new orientation was correct, inasmuch as it recognised the reality of the situation. But the initial blunder of developing a recolutionary movement against feudal-patriarchal reaction under the banner of Soviet Republics and Red Army were not corrected. More costly experiments were still to be made before sound lessons could be learned, and the correct perspective of revolutionary development could be found.

On November 7, 1931, a Provisional Central Soviet Government was set up in the small town of Juichin in the mountainous regions of southern Kiangsi. Then followed three years of bloody civil war, during which the Nanking Government sent no less than five "Anti-Communist Expeditions" for suppressing the perennial peasant revolts in the remote parts of the country. While the northern provinces and the coastal towns of the country were steadily conquered by Japanese Imperialism, the Nanking Government put more than half a million men on the field in its futile struggle against the forces of revolution. In that bloody mission it was liberally supported by foreign Imperialism. The anti-Communist crusades of Chiang Kai-shek were equipped with the most up-to-date weapons. Aeroplanes, supplied from America, Britain and Italy, often piloted also by foreigners, rained bombs on thousands of Chinese villages in the remote provinces of Kiangsi, Hunan etc. If the romantic struggle of those three years did not succeed in building up a stable revolutionary power, the credit does not belong to the Nanking Government. The well-

equipped armies of the latter suffered defeats after defeat, and the result of the whole costly campaign was frustration and discredit for the counter-revolutionary dictatorship. The revolutionary experiment, carried on under the flag of the Soviet Republic and Red Armies, failed because of the initial mistake of choosing those banners, and internal weakness of the movement which could be eliminated only by developing it with more realistic tactics and appropriate slogans.[20]

Much romantic literature has been written about the Chinese Soviets and Red Armies. But the real history of that experiment is still to be written. That is not attempted here. Only a brief analysis of the most recent events is necessary to complete this book which is a history of the Chinese Revolution.

The facts available about the strength of the Chinese "Red Armies" and the extent of territories covered by the "Soviet Republic" are very contradictory. Not only one official report often contradicts another; it is not unusual even for one report to include contradictory facts. A critical examination of all available data establishes that between 1932 to 1934 from sixty to seventy of the eighty-one districts of the province of Kiangsi were occupied by the Red Army in one time or another. It also emerges from a similar examination that outside the Central Soviet District, in the immediate neighbourhood of Juichin, the Red Army could not hold places for any considerable length of time. According to statements made by Mao Tse-tung from time to time, as well as by other authoritative spokesmen of the Communist Party, the Central Soviet territory embraced about seventeen districts spreading over Kiangsi as well as the province of Fukin, with a total population of about three millions.[21] The Soviet districts in other provinces -Hupeh, Hunan, Anhwei and Honan—were much smaller areas, and their stability in time was also very uncertain.

As regards the numerical strength of the Red Army, reliable data do not permit to place the total strength above 150,000 men, nearly three quarters of whom were armed with rifles. In the best days, Chu Teh commanded an army of seventy thousand. But Ho Lung's army seldom exceeded ten thousand. As a matter of fact, its numerical smallness was the cause of its extraordinary mobility. The strength of the Red Armies, however, was not in numbers. They were not only supported by the peasantry, but were organically con-

nected with them. The remoteness of the Soviet districts and the almost complete absence of railways or road also contributed very largely to the victories of the Red Armies. But the attitude of the peasantry was the decisive factor. It was friendly to the Red Armies because in reality they were armed detachments of insurgent peasants. On the other hand, it was decidedly hostile to the Government troops. The Nanking Minister of War complained that "the peasants supported the Reds and made it difficult for the invading armies to secure food or transport".[22] Two years later, Chiang Kai-shek himself admitted that "the punitive forces found it impossible to draw any line between a good citizen and a red partisan, and felt that the enemy is lurking everywhere".[23]

Wherever peasant revolts broke out, land was confiscated and distributed to the poor peasantry. Documents establishing the right of proprietorship were destroyed. Other exploited and oppressed sections of the rural population (agricultural workers, artisans, small traders, poor intellectuals etc.) made common cause with the insurgent peasantry. Deserters from the Government armies brought along not only rifles and ammunition, but sometimes machine-guns also. The decrees of the Soviet Government regularised the distribution of land, abolished indebtedness of the peasantry and all oppressive taxes. Describing the exploits of the Red Armies, an organ of liberal American opinion, published from Shanghai, wrote: "The Red Armies outmanoeuvered and defeated five successive Kuo Min Tang campaigns. Because of the incomparable advantage of the support of the population, their superior mobility and generalship, their knowledge of the terrain, the Reds cut off and defeated Division after Division of Chiang Kai-shek's best troops, and armed themselves exclusively with the weapons they captured. The slogans of 'Land to the peasants' ploughed like tanks through the columns of Chiang Kai-shek's hired soldiers."[24]

Though the troops of the Nanking Government could not penetrate the regions directly under the control of the Central Soviet Government, they gradually closed in from all sides and placed the Soviet territories in the iron ring of an economic blockade. Thrown back on the local resources, the Soviet Government was confronted with almost insoluble economic problems. The internal weakness of the movement began to assert itself. All imports from outside having been stopped, prices of local commodities began to rise. Measures

for controlling prices were resented by the peasantry. On the other hand, wages could not be increased, because that would give the richer peasants an excuse to demand higher price for their produce. Under the pressure of economic difficulties, the Soviet Government came under the domination of the richer section of the peasantry. "The agrarian revolution's most important tasks have not been solved. Not only rich peasants, but even small landlords make their way into the Soviets. . . . The rich peasants seek to steal the fruits of agrarian revolution. The rich peasants' slogan—to distribute land according to productive implements—has not been met with adequate resistance. In some places, it was proposed to confiscate only the lands of the landlords holding more than fifty *mu.* Elsewhere, there was a slogan for payment of debts to landlord usurers owning less than fifty *mu.* Equal division of land is the most important task of the agrarian revolution, but it has been carried out in very few places. The organisation of the poor peasants has not even begun. Coolies and agricultural labourers have not been organised into unions "[25]

These difficulties, evident already in the beginning of the experiment, ultimately rendered the very position of the Soviet Government untenable. The fundamental mistake was about the social character of the revolution. Efforts were made to develop it with slogans of the proletarian revolution. They were bound to fail, because the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution were still to be accomplished. The peasantry as a class, even the poorer strata of the landowning class, were involved in the revolution. This fact was not taken into consideration in the beginning. *It* was noticed later on, but impractical slogans of the proletarian revolution had already disrupted the unity of the forces of the bourgeois democratic revolution. Consequently, the experiment failed, and it was only afterwards that the initial mistakes were rectified.

Immediately al'ter its establishment at the end of 1931, the Provisional Central Soviet Government had passed a Labour Law which was to introduce an eight hour day and double the wages. But before long, it was felt that labour laws suitable for "big cities and large-scale production cannot be completely and mechanically applied in the economically backward Soviet districts".[26] In practice, the law became a dead letter, and feeling themselves neglected, the agricultural workers were very dissatisfied. The Communists themselves realised that the law was impractical. The local Party Committee

condemned and combated the tendency, but it could not be checked. The popular plea against the limitation of working hours was that there was no clock to reckon time. That was not a frivolous, but a very significant argument. Absence of clocks meant extreme social backwardness The revolution had to be adjusted to those conditions. The effort to make it to order was bound to fail.

The problems of the situation were stated as follows: "The result was that the peasants were dissatisfied and the labourers were sceptical about our leadership. It was necessary to improve the conditions of the agricultural labourers. But such improvements must also be regarded by the peasants as necessary and practicable. I have here the petitions of many merchants and employers from which you can see that the mechanical application of the labour law will inevitably be the decline of industry and commerce."[27] In the beginning of 1932, it was evident that the experiment was breaking down under the weight of the contradictions of the situation in which it was taking place. The social atmosphere was even more backward than that in which a bourgeois democratic revolution takes place. It was simply impossible to introduce proletarian leadership there. The Communist Party, as the party of the praletariat, had no place in that atmosphere of social backwardness. The tasks of the revolution were entirely different. They could be accomplished by a movement developing with entirely different slogans. The classes involved had nothing in common with the proletariat. Neither the proletarian ideology nor the programme of the proletarian revolution had any appeal to them. A Communist leader on the spot wrote: "The party in the Soviet districts ignores proletarian hegemony. Everywhere we see the serious phenomenon of the ignoring of the trade-union movement. Proletarian leadership exists in words in party documents."[28]

The Soviet districts were caught up in an acute economic crisis which inevitably had political results. High prices, low wages and unemployment increased the hardships of the masses. Their enthusiasm flagged. There was a general desire for peace. The Red Army began to be depleted by continuous desertions. Defeatism naturally was the prevailing mood. The Communist leader of Fukin, Lo Min? appeared as the spokesman of the defeatist tendency. He is reported to have declared publicly: "Even if our best leaders were to come, or to bring Stalin himself, or even resurrect Lenin, and were to speak all together to the masses, I do not think it will help change

their moods."[28]

The "Lo Min Line" spread throughout the Soviet territories. Even functionaries of the Communist Party fled from their posts. The Red Armies could not get new recruits. "The partisan bands not only rarely grow, but are shrinking daily. Desertions with rifles and betrayals are constantly occurring. Corruption and degeneration constantly appear."[30] When the Soviets and the Red Army were thus very seriously weakened from inside, Chiang Kai-shek decided to deliver the last blow. The Communist Party made a supreme effort to keep the forces together in that last trial of strength. The representative of the Central Committee. Chou En-lai, made a passionate appeal for "struggle against all kinds of wavering, pessimism, passivity, despair, weariness and capitulation".[51]

Repeated defeats had persuaded Chiang Kai-shek to abandon the old tactics of frontal attack. With a huge army of nearly half a million men, he encircled the Soviet territory which was attacked only from the air. Starvation on earth and death from the air finally broke the morale of the embattled insurgents, and another chapter in the history of the costly experiment was closed.

The following chapter records the end of the adventure. But that was certainly the grand finale, characterised by bravery and remarkable military feats, unsurpassed not only by the previous exploits of the Chinese Red Army, but generally recognised as unparallelled in all history.

In the summer of 1934, it was decided to abandon the base **in** Kiangsi and lead the more stable part of the Red Army to some other part of the country, where it could have a more dependable source of supply, and could not be surrounded from all sides. Only the north-western provinces offered such possibilities. For one thing, there the revolutionary base would be so very far away that the armed forces of the Nanking Government would not be able to attack it easily. Secondly, supplies from the Soviet Union could be made more easily available through Mongolia. But the problem was, how to reach there. The half-starved, ill-equipped army must march practically across the entire country, through half a dozen large provinces mostly infested with counter-revolutionary armed bands. But a desperate attempt must be made if sure destruction was to be avoided. Almost superhuman courage was required, even to make that decision. In August an army of ten thousand picked men commanded by Hsiao

Keh was despatched as the vanguard. It broke through the lines of Chiang Kai-shek's army and marched westwards. Two months later, the main body of the Red Army, commanded by Chu Teh and Mao Tse-tung, also started out on that grandest of military adventures of all times.

On November 10, the counter-revolutionary army occupied the evacuated seat of the Soviet Republic. For three years that small area had been defended against continued attacks from all sides by a well-equipped army of half a million men. After three years, the episode ended, not in a victory of counter-revolution, but a failure of an Utopian experiment. Militarily, the laurels must all go to the Red Army. Political mistakes, however, rendered those military achievements fruitless. At last the bitter and costly experience was to force the rectification of those fatal mistakes.

For a whole year the Red Army marched across the provinces of Hunan, Kweichow and Yunan, pursued by the most mobile divisions of Chiang Kai-shek's army. But it was never caught, all the time its Commanders showing amazing tactical skill which completely frustrated all the efforts of the enemy operating with incomparably superior weapons. It moved "like flowing water and moving clouds ', as insurgent peasant bands had been traditionally described in Chinese history. In a way it became a Chinese institution. Although, for a variety of reasons, it could not establish a stable base anywhere, there can be no doubt that all along the way it received the sympathy, support and furtive co-operation of the peasant masses. Otherwise, it could not have performed the miracles that it did. After some months, it appeared in the western parts of the remote province of Szechwan, on the borders of Tibet. There it was reinforced by another detachment of armed peasantry which had been operating there as a Red Army for two years. Having taken a brief respite, the united forces of the Red Army marched northward over high mountain passes and finally reached the north-western province of Shensi, bordering on Mongolia, in October 1935. There, the authority of the Nanking Government did not reach. The titular ruler of those parts was Feng Yu-hsiang who was at that time eager to receive Russian support for one of the periodical campaigns for extending his power over the whole of the north of the country. Consequently, the Red Army could at last settle down unmolested, and recuperate itself with directly needed rest and new supplies.

Once again, counter-revolution appeared to be finally triumphant. On the pretext of pursuing the Red Army, his troops had established themselves in the south-western provinces of Kweichow, Yunan and Szechwan which had until then been practically independent of the Nanking Government To celebrate his victory, Chiang Kai-shek made an extensive air-tour through the newly acquired territories and went as far as the north-western province of Shansi and even Inner Mongolia which had been annexed by Japan for all practical purposes.

But that was a demonstration also against Japanese Imperialism. Although during the years of civil war the National Government of Nanking and the Japanese invaders were united in the determination to free China from the Communist menace, the former did not receive much actual support from the latter for the anti-Communist crusade which .left the north and east of the country open to Japanese invasion. The real help for the holy cause came from the Christian Powers. The German General, von Seeckt, came to China with a large number of Prussian officers to train the legions of Chiang Kai-shek which were sent against the Communists. Not only modern weapons were supplied freely from America, England, Italy and Germany, but American and Italian fliers were employed to bomb defenceless Chinese villages. Internal water-ways of the country were guarded by scores of foreign battleships which kept the insurgent peasantry away from the urban areas and main industrial centres. Communists were arrested in the foreign Settlements and callously handed over to the hangmen of the Nanking Government. The anti-Communist campaigns of Chiang Kai-shek were financed with loans given by American and British banks. In 1933 fifty million dollars came from Wall Street. The next year the bullion basis of the Chinese currency was undermined by the American policy of purchasing silver. In 1935, British finance came to the rescue and the Chinese dollar was pegged to the pound sterling. Following the visit of Sir Frederick Leith-Ross, as representative of the British Treasury, money became easy again in the Shanghai market, and in the beginning of 1936, the Chinese banks could finance manufacturing enterprises to the extent of a hundred million dollars. There was a negotiation for a thirty million pounds loan from England.

All that valuable, and to a certain extent vicarious, aid enabled the Nanking Government to carry on its ruinously costly struggle

long enough to drive the Red Army to the remotest parts of the country. But it was to pay for it in a different way. Japan had established her domination in China almost to the extent of encroaching upon the vested interests of the rival imperialist Powers. Since these were not in a position to risk a war with Japan, the Nanking Government was instigated to stiffen its back and put up a resistance against Japanese aggression, as soon as it was freed from the menace of the Red Army which had haunted it like a nightmare for several years.

There was a realignment of forces. The latest triumph of counter-revolution immediately forced a split in its own ranks. As soon as the Nanking Government showed the tendency of resisting further Japanese aggression, the northern war-lords seized the opportunity of revolting against it, hoping to be backed by Japanese Imperialism. On the other hand, Chang Hsue-liang had been driven out of Manchuria upon its formal annexation by Japan. But with his large army, he was still a force in the north-western provinces. To fight Japan he was seeking the support of the Soviet Union. So the circumstances were all favourable for the creation of a new revolutionary base where the Red Army had finally reached after its spectacular march through nine provinces. The headquarter of the Central Soviet Government was established in the small town of Ningsha on the northern extremity of Shensi, near the border of Mongolia.

Notes

1. *Military Bulletin of the Central Committee of the C.P. of China,* January 15, 1930.

2. About three // make an English mile.

3. Military Bulletin of the Central Committee of the C.P. of China, January 15, 1930.

4. *Letter to All the Comrades,* November 1.1, 1928.

5. *Resolution* on the Peasant Question.

6. Report of the Kiangsu Provincial Committee.

7. Report on the History and Present Condition of the Chu-mao Red Army.

8. Molotov's report to the Sixteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet, 1930.

9. *Resolution* adopted by the Political Secretariat of the E. C. C. I., July 23, 1930.

10. Letter of the E. C. C. I., to the Communist Party of China, October 26, 1929.

11. Resolution on *The New Revolutionary Wave,* adopted by the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China, June 11,1930.

12. Lo Mai, Speech to the Shanghai active workers, December 3, 1930.

13. *China To-Morrow,* Shanghai, May 1930. (Retranslated from German).

14. *Resolution of the Central Committee,* Communist Party of China, September 1930.

15. Discussion on the Li Li-san Line by the Presidium of the E. C. C. I., December 1930.

16. Letter of the E. C. C. I., to the Communist Party of China, published in the *Truth,* December 14, 1920.

17. Chiu Chiu-pi, "Capture and Loss of Kian", *Truth,* December 9, 1930.

18. Chou En-lai's report, September 24, 1930.

19. *Ibid.*

20. Already in 1930, when the world was being regaled with reports about Red Armies conquering province after province, I protested against that romantic adventure. Every Marxist acquainted with the conditions in China could see that it was foredoomed to collapse. I advocated that the Communist party should abandon military adventures and return to the field of political activity as the champion of the demand of the democratic masses, including the urban petit-bourgeoisie. Guerilla warfare in the more backward parts of the country was not the proper method of combating the reactionary nationalists and the military dictatorship of Chiang Kai-shek. The fight must take place throughout the country, particularly in the important political, industrial and commercial centres. To be able to function there as an effective political force, the revolutionary party must regain the confidence of the urban democratic masses. A National Assembly, elected by universal suffrage to frame the Constitution of a democratic State, would be the suitable demand with which a powerful popular movement could be developed to challenge the military dictatorship of Chiang Kai-shek. I recommended that course of action already in 1929." (M.N. Roy, "My Experience in China", pp. 68-69).

21. *The Struggle,* Juichin, May to November 1933.

22. *Shanghai Evening Post,* November 10, 1931.

23. *Chung Yang-kung Lien,* June 1933.

24. *China Forum, Shanghai,* January 20, 1932.

25. Letter of the E. C. C. I., to .the Communist Party of China, November 1930.

26. Lo Fu (Member of the Soviet Government), "The Examination of the Execution of the Labour Laws", May 1, 1933.

27. Lo Fu, *U>id.*

28. Teng Yen-tsao, "Examination of the Struggle for Strengthening the Proletariat"

in *Struggle,* February 4, 1933.

29. Po Ku "For a Bolshevik Line in the Party", *Struggle,* February 23, 1933.

30. Lo Mai, "For a Bolshevik Turn", *Struggle,* August 22, 1933.

31. "Smash the Fifth Campaign", *Struggle,* August *29,* 1933.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE LESSON

A correct analysis of the social forces involved in the revolution would have spared China the frightfully costly experiment. Political movements need no longer be completely empirical. Not for Marxists, at any rate. Having regard for the characteristic features of the situation, one could hardly speak of "Red Armies" and "Soviets" in China. The latter are organs of proletarian dictatorship, specific creations of the proletarian revolution. A Red Army also is created by the working class in power. Whatever possibility there was of the Chinese Nationalist Revolution outgrowing the bourgeois democratic limits under the hegemony of the proletariat, that perspective completely disappeared after the defeat of 1927. The destruction of the Communist Party was bound to determine the future development of the revolution. Counter-revolutionary terror broke the organised power of the working class, and drove the revolution to the village. There it resisted all efforts to destroy it. But there was a shift in its social foundation. It became a purely peasant movement. Since 1928 the insurgent peasantry of China fought more or less under Communist leadership. But they were certainly not fighting for Communism. The serious defeat of 1927 threw the revolution back to a stage even prior to ths bourgeois revolution. The revolutionary movement in the years of civil war was rather analogous to the Peasant Wars of Europe. After its recovery from defeat, the revolution might have regained the lost ground very quickly; for the time being, it was developed with slogans, programme and forms of organisation adapted to the atmosphere of social backwardness to which it was confined.

The peasantry did not fight for Communism; the local organs of power created by them were not organs of proletarian dictatorship. The character of the "Red Army" was determined by its social com-

position. It was fifty-eight per cent poor peasants, twenty-seven per cent deserters from Government armies (they were also poor peasants) eleven percent village paupers and four percent workers (most probably land-labourers and more or less destitute artisans).[1] Armed forces thus composed socially could not be compared with an army created by the proletariat after the capture of power. The specific feature of the latter is that the cad re of officers and the nucleus are exclusively proletarian. That was certainly not the case with the Chinese "Red Armies". Therefore, it was a misnomer. Political terminologies are not mere words. They have definite social content.

As regards the "Soviets", they were also something entirely different. They were created after certain districts were occupied by the Red Armies. Evidently, they did not rise as the organs of political power captured by the proletariat. Created by the Red Armies, the Soviets could only be the organs of a State, the political character of which must be determined by the social composition of the creator.

The entire movement was not led by the proletatiat. The participation of Communists, even in leading positions, could not change that fact. The peasant uprisings "spread often spontaneously, without being led by the Communist Party. Wherever guerilla bands operate, the Soviets are built from below. First, the peasants organise themselves; then, the land is distributed; finally begins the attack on the cities."[2] Admittedly, the movement as a whole was not always and everywhere even formally under the leadership of the Communist Party which itself, by that time, had ceased to be the party of the proletariat. Agricultural wage-earners participated in the organs of power created by the insurgent peasantry. But they were dominated by the latter.

The peasants revolted against intolerable conditions created by the decayed feudal-patriarchal social system, made still more oppressive by primitive capitalism. They were oppressed and exploited by parasitic trading capital, usury and high taxation. In addition, there were extortions by the militarists and bandits, the latter themselves being a creation of the entire social system. The maximum demand of the peasantry, not yet consciously made, was the entire abolition of all those conditions. But that would not mean the establishment of Socialism. That would rather promote economic reconstruction on the basis of the so-called capitalistic mode of production. That

perspective of economic development could not be radically altered by the failure of the bourgeoisie to lead the peasantry in their revolutionary struggle. The revolution, demanded for the welfare of the peasantry themselves, could not succeed until it embraced the urban areas also. In other words, the peasants could not free themselves exclusively by their own action, however powerful that might be. So long as the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie, supported by the Imperialism, held power in the cities and controlled the industrial centres and the main commercial arteries of the country, peasant uprisings could not have any decisive revolutionary consequence. And the peasantry could not carry the revolution to the cities. That should have been known beforehand. However, it was proved by experience.

Almost completely destroyed by counter-revolutionary terror, the Communist Party withdrew into the mountainous regions, there to organise guerilla bands, and set up "Soviet Republics" in isolated districts, occupied temporarily. It lost almost all influence in the industrial centres where counter-revolution raged unchallenged. The curse of militarism rests so heavily on China that even the Communists could not escape it. Instead of trying to utilise all possible legal channels of agitation, propaganda and organisation, the Communists set up the theory that in China any movement, even one based upon the minimum demands of the workers and peasants, must directly develop into an armed struggle.

"Even in undertaking a struggle with small demands, we must, from the very beginning, be prepared for an armed struggle. Whoever thinks that in .China it is possible to restrict a struggle to daily demands, supports the *kulak* line. The *kulaks* (rich peasants) and those small peasants who come forward as the leaders of the agrarian movement, march together with the peasant masses, to the cities, there they present petitions to the official and thereby win some success with the local authorities. The task of our party organisation must be to confront the kulak movement with our line—of deepening the struggle which leads to armed uprising. Whoever denies such a possibility, is a liquidator of the struggle in the Chinese villages."[3]

Experience shows that it was the "party line"—of establishing Soviet Republics with village paupers—which contributed to the liquidation of the experiment of the Central Soviet District. The result of that line was that the movement embraced mostly the village

paupers, exactly the element which for years had served as the cannon-fodder for militarism. That is a very insecure foundation for a revolutionary movement. On such a foundation, a powerful army could possibly be created, provided that necessary arms and other supplies were available. But "Soviets" established by such armies could be abiding if they embraced practically the entire rural population. The activity of the rich peasants objectively represented the striving of the bourgeoisie to reap the fruits of the agrarian revolution. The guarantee against that danger was to be found in the support and confidence of the small peasant-proprietors who constituted the main factor of agrarian production. They must be detached from the well-to-do peasantry and small landlords. That could be done only if the Communists participated in the movement based upon the immediate minimum demands of the peasantry as a whole. In the earlier stages, even the rich peasantry could not be, and should not be, excluded from the movement. Experience drove the Communists in the Kiangsi Soviet districts to come to that conclusion. But it was too late. The utopion experiment of making a proletarian revolution with village paupers had already gone too far. The alternative policy of leading the entire peasantry in a movement with minimum partial demands would have developed the revolutionary peoples' committees (called Soviets) into local organs of democratic power which alone could unite the rural masses in a large scale, sustaining struggle against reaction. That policy would have succeeded in reorganising the forces of revolution soon after the defeat.

But the Communist Party preferred to base itself on the village paupers, necessarily inclined towards banditry. Consequently, it failed to develop the peasant uprising as a part of the still-to-be accomplished democratic revolution. Dislodged from its appropriate social base in the industrial areas, isolated from the urban democratic masses, the Communist Party overestimated the value of military action and neglected the task of re-mobilising the defeated and demoralised urban democratic masses in a political struggle. The devotion, heroism and determination of the Communists succeeded in creating a powerful army out of the insurgent peasantry. The accident of some of them possessing extraordinary military talent made the experiment so very imposing, for the time being, that the internal weakness of the movement and the political mistakes of its

leaders were not detected before it was too late.

The Nineteenth Route Army, betrayed by Chiang Kai-shek for its heroic defense of Shanghai against Japanese aggression in 1932, was partially under Communist influence. The action of the army aroused great enthusiasm among the democratic masses. That helped the Communists to realise the possibility of developing a broad mass movement under the nationalist banner of opposing Japanese Imperialism. The Communist Party called upon the Chinese people to declare a war against Japan. In the beginning of 1933, the Red Army proclaimed its readiness to join hands with any other armed forces with the purpose of defending the country against imperialist invaders. The proposed united front was to be made on the following terms:

1. Cessation of the anti-Communist campaign; 2. Grant of democratic rights to the people; and 3. Arming of masses. The offer not only created a good impression among the disinterested democratic elements, sick and tired of continued civil wars; even many officers of the Nationalist Army thought that it merited consideration. But Chiang Kai-shek believed that he was on the point of final victory. Nor was he as yet sufficiently indebted to Anglo-American finance to forfeit the patronge of Japanese Imperialism. In a conference of the Generals of the Nationalist Army he declared that "until the Communists are exterminated, it is useless to speak about resistance to Japan." On the same occasion he threatened that severe punishment would be given to anybody advocating an anti-Japanese united front with the Red Army.[4]

That was a step in the right direction on the part of the Communists. Chiang Kai-shek turned down the ofier of united front and went ahead with his anti-Communist crusade. The offer, however, appealed to the nationalist sentiment of the democratic masses! Further advance in the right direction was delayed by the success of Chiang Kai-shek in dislodging the Red Army from its original base. The step in the right direction was definitely takenwh en the Red Army was making the historic march from the south to the north-west.

In August 1934, a document entitled "The Basic Programme of the Chinese People in a War Against Japan" was issued over the signature of Mme. Sun Yat-sen and more than three thousand prominent persons from all walks of life. Although no direct relation between the

two moves could be traced, yet it is evident that the

latter represented the popular response to the earlier offer of the Communists for a united anti-imperialist front. The progamme called for the arming of the whole population and mobilisation of all resources of the nation for a determined struggle against Japanese invasion.

At the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International, held in July 1935, the leader of the Communist Party of China, Wang Min, made the following declaration: "The Communist Party has no other means for the general mobilisation of the entire Chinese nation for the sacred national revolutionary war against Japanese Imperialism than the tactics of the anti-imperialist front. For this purpose, an appeal should be made to all the people, all parties, groups, troops, mass organisations, and to all prominent political and social leaders, to organise together with us an All-China United People's Government of National Defence and an All-China United Anti-Japanese National Defence Army."[6] The radical change of policy brought about by a belated correct appreciation of the problems is evident when one recollects a declaration made by the same authoritative person two years earlier. In 1933, Wang Min had declared that "the overthrow of the Kuo Min Tang as the Government of national betrayal and national disgrace as a condition of the successful carrying out of the national revolutionary war could be realised only by the Soviet Government and by the Red Army."[6] The characterisation of the Kuo Min Tang was correct. But the Communists were still labouring under the illusion that the national revolutionary war could be conducted without mobilising the entire democratic masses. They had not yet learned that the Soviet Government and the Red Army were not the appropriate instruments for the purpose. Two more years of bitter and costly experience drove the lesson home. The response to the first halting move, as expressed in the appeal of Mme. Sun Yat-sen and others, showed that a bold advance in that direction alone could save the revolution.

But flushed with his victory over the Red Army, Chiang Kai-shek was not yet in the mood to share power with anybody. Consequently, while consolidating their new base in the north-west, the Communists carried on the propaganda for the formation of the united front against Japanese aggression. The propaganda found increasing response, and the democratic masses throughout the

country began to assert themselves through the development of an anti-Japanese movement. Chiang Kai-shek's rivals in the nationalist camp seized upon the demand for unity as a pretext to revolt against him. Some of his important lieutenants, controlling the southern and middle-Yangtse provinces, declared their sympathy and support for the anti-Japanese movement. At that moment, progressive and democratic nationalist elements, mostly hailing from the urban middle-class, formed an organisation called the "National Salvation Association". In an Open Letter to the Communist Party, it made the following appeal:

"We hope that the Chinese Communist Party will show by concrete acts that it is sincere in its desire to unite with other parties. In the districts occupied by the Red Army, the (peasant) proprietors and merchants must receive liberal treatment. Every effort must be made to avoid conflicts between workers and employers in the big cities, so as not to impede the expansion of the united front for the salvation of the country. The Committees for National Salvation and other mass organisations frequently include young people who advocate such slogans as 'class against class' and 'struggle against the Kuo Min Tang', to the great prejudice of the united front. Detachments appear here and there which call themselves Communist partisans and take the law into their own hands. If these undisciplined detachments are under the control of the Communist Party, the latter must take stringent measures against them, or otherwise declare that it is in no way connected with them."[7]

The reply of the Communists was given in an official statement by Mao Tse-tung in his capacity as the head of the Soviet Government. He wrote: "We have already adopted a decision not to confiscate the land of the rich peasants. We are not confiscating the property and the factories of the big and small merchants and capitalists. We protect their enterprises. As for the active anti-Japanese officers and big landowners, we can state that their estates and property are not subject to confiscation. The former laws about workers' control and leadership in various enterprises have been repealed. The workers have been advised not to put up demands which may be in excess of what can be granted. In the non-Soviet districts, it is our intention not to accentuate the anti-capitalist struggle. The common interests of both capitalists and workers are grounded in the struggle against imperialist aggression. What

we are most interested in, and consider most important, is that all parties and groups should treat us without animosity and bear in mind the objective of the struggle against Japan for the salvation of the country."[8] In the same letter, it was announced that the "Workers' and Peasants' Government" and the "Workers' and Peasants' Army" had been renamed the "People's Soviet Government" and the "People's Red Army" respectively.

Mao Tse-tung's letter was followed up by a declaration of the Communist Party, addressed to the Kuo Min Tang: "We are prepared to form a strong revolutionary united front with you, as was the case during the Great Chinese Revolution of 1925-27. You have not forgotten the glorious history of collaboration between the Communist Party and the Kuo Min Tang. Our national oppressors were very much afraid that our collaboration might lead to final victroy and the complete emancipation of China. Therefore, they sowed the seeds of strife between us and set in motion all possible means, threats and temptations, as a result of which one side gave up its collaboration and buried the united front. Do you feel no pricks of conscience when you recall this to-day?"[8]

Although the conciliatory attitude of the Communists was welcomed by the more progressive nationalist who pressed for the cessation of civil war, and united anti-Japanese front, the Nanking Government still believed that its position had been sufficiently consolidated. With that belief, it refused to accept the offer of the Communists. But, on the other hand, it could not resist the growing popular demand for resistance to Japanese aggression. Its Anglo-American patrons were also making the same demand. Consequently, in September 1936, Chiang Kai-shek rejected the terms of Japanese Imperialism for "co-operation against Communists". At the same time, he reaffirmed his determination to carry on his campaign against the Communists. He is reported to have said: "I will never talk about this (unity) until every red soldier in China is exterminated, and every Communist is in prison. Only then would it be possible to co-operate with Russia."[10] That was his reply to the proposition made by Chang Hsueliang that for an effective resistance to Japan the civil war must stop, and an alliance be made with the Soviet Union.

But events moved fast, eventually forcing Chiang Kai-shek's hand. His unexpectedly hostile attitude provoked Japan to move the

Manchurian troops towards Peking. As previously, the armies of the Nanking Government failed to put up any serious resistance. But the provincial forces acted on their own initiative, and the Japanese attack was repulsed. That event gave a big fillip to the anti-Japanese movement throughout the country, and the demand for the suspension of civil war was pressed more vigorously. Chiang Kai-shek retorted by ordering the arrest of seven leaders of the National Salvation Association, and breaking up anti-Japanese students demonstrations in Shanghai. On the other hand, he accused the North-Western Army, which had just repulsed the Japanese invasion, of insubordination to the central authority, and ordered it to begin operation against the Communists. He suffered a severe defeat in that last anti-Communist expedition. Thereupon, he himself flew to Sian in order to enforce his authority, and to despatch the rebellious North-Western Army to the south. But there was a surprise in store for him. The Generalissimo of the National Army was received by a revolt of the Sian .garrison which took him prisoner on December 11.

From his captivity, Chiang Kai-shek appealed to the Nanking Generals not to take any military measures for his release. The spirit against him was so strong that nobody expected him to return alive. That famous incident of Sian still remains shrouded in mystery. But all available data go to show that his life was saved on the intervention of the Communists, and that, in order to save his life, he accepted the Communist offer for a national united front against Japanese Imperialism. A Communist writer testifies that the Chinese Communists on the spot exerted "great influence with the Manchurian Army to preserve Chiang and send him back as national leader to Nanking."[31] However, it is a fact that a prominent leader of the Chinese Communist Party, Chou En-lai, met Chiang Kai-shek in his captivity at Sian and persuaded him to accept the offer of unity in the anti-Japanese struggle. The new policy of the Communist Party having been authoritatively explained to him, Chiang Kai-shek "became more convinced, not only of the sincerity of his immediate captors, but also of the Reds, in their opposition to civil war and their readiness to assist in the peaceful unification of the country under his own leadership, provided he defined a policy of armed resistance to Japan."[12]

Chiang Kai-shek was released on the Christmas day, and flew

straight to Nanking. Presumably, he had agreed to the proposition of the Communists, backed up by the North-Western Army. On his return he found that the movement for united resistance to Japan had grown much stronger. The press organs of Anglo-American Imperialism, such as the Shanghai Evening Post and the North-China Daily News, openly supported the demand, and advised Chiang Kai-shek to make up with the Communists since the latter had changed their policy so very radically. The former, for example, wrote: "It does appear to be more and more generally realised that the Communists of China are not now Communists in any essential What is there about the so-called Communist Programme of the present day which warrants refusal to make peace with a group no longer committed to anything fundamentally Communistic?"[13]

Chiang could no longer be obstinate. He convened a meeting of the Central Executive Committee of the Kuo Min Tang which met at Nanking on February 15, 1937. On that occasion, a telegram was received from the Communist Party which declared that it had already changed its policy and was prepared to act on the following lines: 1. To cease the civil war against the Nanking armies, except in defence; 2. To change the Soviet Government into the Government of the Special Region of the Republic of China; 3. To place the Red Army under the direct command of the Central Government and the Military Affairs Commission of Nanking; 4. To enforce a thorough democratic system of universal suffrage within the areas under the jurisdiction of the Government of the Special Region; and 5. To abandon the policy of expropriating the landlords. The letter concluded with an appeal to the Kuo Min Tang to adopt in return the following programme: 1. Suspension of civil wars of all kinds and concentration of the national strength for united resistance to external aggression; 2. Freedom of speech, assembly and organisation; 3. Release of all political prisoners; 4. Convocation of a Congress of all parties, military groups and organisations in order to select leaders capable of carrying out the salvation of the country; 5. Immediate accomplishment of the preparatory work for a war of resistance against Japan; and 6. Amelioration of the living conditions of the people.

The Kuo Min Tang Executive Committee thereupon passed a resolution formulating four conditions for a reconciliation with the Communists. The conditions were: 1. Abolition of the Red Army

and its incorporation into the nation's armed forces under a unified command; 2. Unification of Government power in the hands of the Central Government and dissolution of the so-called Chinese Soviet Republic and other organisations detrimental to governmental unity; 3. Absolute cessation of Communist propaganda; and 4. Stoppage of the class struggle. Obviously, the Kuo Min Tang leaders wanted to temporise. In view of the growing popular demand for unity and cessation of civil wars, so that the country could be defended against the Japanese invaders, they did not dare to turn down the Communist offer which was very conciliatory. The conditions they made had already been accepted voluntarily by the Communists.

On March 15, the Communist Party formally accepted the terms of the Central Executive Committee of the Kuo Min Tang. The Soviet Government of China voluntarily abdicated in favour of a national bourgeois democracy after a decade of such a bitterly fought civil war as the world had never experienced before. More than a million lives had been sacrificed in that war. The territory under the jurisdiction of the defunct Soviet Government was renamed "The Bordering Districts of Shensi, Kansu and Ningsha" as an integral part of the still to be established Chinese Republic with its headquarters at Nanking. The Red Army was assigned by order from Nanking to a "Garrison Area" in North Shensi, and was granted a subsidy. Thus ended definitely the attempt to build a Soviet Republic in the midst of social conditions which could generate the forces only for a bourgeois democratic revolution.

Meanwhile, the Japanese invaders pressed forward from all directions. In July they again began operations m North China with the object of capturing Peking. Violating all his previous declarations, Chiang Kai-shek pursued the policy of local settlement with Japan and ordered the withdrawal of Chinese forces from the Peking-Tientsin area. But the North-Western Army, under the influence of Communist propaganda, had been inspired with the spirit of resistance. At the same time, the Japanese became active also on the Shanghai front. Chiang Kai-shek could no longer hesitate and temporise. Nanking itself was threatened by the foreign invader. In the beginning of September the negotiations for the establishment of the national united front with the Communists were formally concluded. On September 10 the Red Army was formally incorpora-

ted in the Nationalist Army under the supreme command of Chiang Kai-shek, as the Eighth Route Army. From its headquarters at Fushih in Shensi, the Communist Party issued a proclamation on September 22, dissolving the Soviet Republic. A foreign visitor reported that the most popular slogan in the Communist Headquarters was: "Let us support General Chiang to lead the anti-Japanese war."[14] The Communist Youth Congress held at Yenan in Shensi was reported to have elected Chiang Kai-shek its Honorary President, together with Chu Teh and Mao Tse-tung.

A foreign journalist observing the transformation on the spot, wrote: "The struggle for the Soviets in China is half as old as the U.S.S.R.,and has been almost as bloody. Here is a revolutionary army of some hundred thousand men, the nucleus of which has fought nearly every day for ten years against everything which the Kuo Min Tang uniforms have represented. This army lives on a basis of pure war-communism while it carries out orders of the Communist Party to support the ruling classes of China in a war, although most of their families have been massacred by that ruling class. How is this phenomenon possible? It is not merely a united national front against Japanese aggression. The whole question was decided two years ago, as a result of a change of views regarding the nature of the Chinese Revolution. Is this giving up the Soviets; is it a defeat or merely a strategy? It is not viewed in these terms, but is looked at in a very unemotional matter-of-fact way. Everyone seems to accept it as a part of historical determinism as a new stage in the development of the unaccomplished Chinese Revolution which they now regard as a bourgeois democratic revolution. The question why this has not been so ten years ago, is not discussed. Some look at the change as one step backward to achieve two steps forward. Others say they should never have tried to have Soviets in 1928, or at least given them up in 1932."[15]

The questions raised by the above observer were answered by Mao Tse-tung in the Congress of the Communist Party held in May 1937. He said: "We support the theory of the transformation of the revolution. The democratic revolution will change to Socialism. In this democratic revolution, there are stages of development, but all are under the slogan of the Democratic Republic, not under that of a Soviet Republic. We are for passing through all necessary stages of the Democratic Republic to reach Socialism." The Communist

Party adopted a new programme of the following ten points:

1. To fight Japan thoroughly and decisively and drive Japanese Imperialism out of China. 2. To stop all diplomatic negotiations with Japan and oppose the compromising and wavering attitude of the Nanking Government. 3. To mobilise the armies of the whole nation on the front to fight against the Japanese. 4. To mobilise the whole body of the masses to join the war front against the Japanese, to give the people the freedom of patriotic activity and the freedom to arm themselves. 5. To organise a National Defence Government of all parties, clearing out the traitors and other forces of Japanese Imperialism in China. 6. To establish an anti-Japanese diplomatic policy, enter into a military agreement with the U.S.S.R., and into a Pacific Anti-Japanese Agreement with England, America and France. 7. To adopt an anti-Japanese financial policy; the principle of this financial policy being that everybody who has money must support the nation, and that all the property of Japanese Imperialism must be confiscated. The principle of the economic policy should be to boycott the use of Japanese goods and to increase the use of national goods. 8. To improve and reconstruct the life of the people, including the removal of the many unjust sur-taxes, decrease of taxes and rents. 9. To develop the anti-Japanese national defence education. 10. To organise a united front of the whole country with the unification of the two parties (Kuo Min Tang and Communist) as the basis for the struggle against the Japanese. Declaring the programme publicly, Mao Tse-tung remarked : "If we can realise them (the ten points), we san strike down Japanese Imperialism; if not, China will perish."

The Kuo Min Tang leaders made the united front with great mental reservations. Even a radical change in the perspective of the Communist Party regarding the development of the revolution was not sufficiently reassuring for them.

However, events moved swiftly. The cessation of civil war and the formation of an united front to resist Japanese aggression inspired confidence in the final victory, replacing the general hopelessness and despondency which had demoralised and paralysed the Chinese army continually retreating before the invader. The Eighth Route Army, commanded by Chu Teh and his Communist Staff became the spearhead of the counter-offensive. To inspire new courage and a militant spirit in the hard-pressed peasant-soldiers, all the members

of the family of a soldier were exempted from labour service; their rents were reduced by one quarter; landowners were strictly forbidden to take the land away from them.

On the other hand, the Chinese resistance was very greatly reinforced by material help from the Soviet Union coming through Mongolia- The regular troops, ably supported by numerous guerilla bands, made the position of the Japanese invader insecure and dangerous. Everywhere, Japanese troops were attacked from the rear and harrassed on their way. They were dislodged from one position after another. The Chinese bourgeoisie, however, still depended rather on the support of the rival imperialist Powers than on the revolutionary forces inside the country and the unconditional support of the Soviet Union. There were rumours of a big financial deal with some American firm.

Participating in the United National Front, as its most active factor, the Communists, however, endeavoured to mobilise the masses so as to resist any future betrayal of the nationalist movement by the reactionary elements. The policy of the Communists was outlined by Yen Peh-hsi, the head of the Political Department of the Eighth Route Army, as follows: "Our primary task is to establish close and friendly relations between the troops and the population. At the same time, we arm the population in order that they may fight with us. Among the armed population, there are two groups: guerillas and self-defence troops. The latter are not released from their ordinary work. We are also devoting considerable attention to improving the standard of living of the people. Rents and rates of interest are being reduced. Land and other taxes are being abolished as far as possible. We give aid to the refugees. They are placed with families in the safety zone. They too are mobilised and armed, and often go back to their towns and villages. First we must abolish all taxes and levies, for we cannot expect poor people to fight against the Japanese robbers and at the same time pay taxes and levies. But the rich people must give money."

According to the policy formulated in the above declaration, the defence of the country was no longer the task only of the regular army. The masses of the people were armed and mobilised to fight against Japanese Imperialism. At the same time, the demands of the popular masses were directly linked with the fight of the nationalist troops against foreign aggression. A popular movement thus deve-

loped was bound to sweep away eventually native exploiters as well as the foreign oppressors. That prospect naturally inspired the Chinese masses with new courage and determination.

The situation, though hopeful, is however not without danger. The Communists are paying heavily for national unity, they seem to be throwing the baby out with the bath water. The reunited nationalist movement remains almost completely under the leadership of the same reactionary clique which carried on a bloody civil war against the forces of revolution for a whole decade. They do not trust the Communists who are only tolerated. "The visitor to Hankow first observes that Chinese Communists have just begun to attain that same legality and freedom which Communists enjoy in the United States. They have secured the release of their political prisoners and the right to make occasional speeches supporting the war against Japan. Two or three times a year, their Central Committee issues Open Manifestoes regarding the proper method of winning the war and improving the livelihood of the people; these are usually played down, or entirely omitted in Kuo Min Tang newspapers, but have increasingly wide repercussion among Chinese intellectuals and eventually reach the Kuo Ming Tang rank and file. In return for this rather moderate toleration, the Communists have called off their ten years' opposition to the Central Government of China, and formed with it a united anti-Japanese front. Instead of stirring up class war between peasants and landlords, they stress the slogan 'Chinese do not fight Chinese'. They have organised the rural population in two provinces of North China so that, instead of yielding passively to the invader, they have become a hard nut for the Japanese to crack. They have donated to their country an extremely efficient method of mobile warfare, developed through ten years of civil war."[16]

In the same article by a Communist journalist, the representative of the Communist Party in the Nationalist capital is reported to have declared: "We consider that China needs the Kuo Min Tang. Our Communist Party represents the working class: it does not claim to, and cannot, represent the whole people. For a considerable time to come, China needs a party representing many other classes— merchants, intellectuals, landlords. Our hope is that the Kuo Min Tang will strengthen itself by getting rid of corrupt officials, reactionaries and traitors."

The danger of bending the stick in the other direction is evident. The welcome zeal to learn from the bitter experience of the recent years should not make one forget the equally bitter experience made previously. The belated realisation that the party of the working class could not lead a revolution involving other classes having no sympathy for Socialism, should not lead to the repetition of older mistakes. If the party of the working class could not assume the sole leadership of the revolutionary movement, that could be done much less by a party which would embrace not only the reactionary merchants but also feudal landlords.

Developments since the formation of the national united front have not borne out the hope that the Kuo Min Tang will strengthen itself by getting rid of the reactionaries in its ranks. It has continued the renewed co-operation with the Communists because thereby it is reinforced nationally as well as internationally. Having been driven to resist Japanese invasion, the Nationalist Government requires unstinted support from outside. That did not come from the rival Imperialist Powers. It comes from the only source which was so very helpful to the Chinese Nationalists once previously, namely, from the Soviet Union. On the other hand, thanks to the activity of the Communists, the masses have been mobilised in self-defence. The resistance to Japan is no longer conditional upon the attitude of treacherous and fickle-minded military leaders. The modern army of Japanese Imperialism has dealt blow after blow to Chinese resistance. During the last two years, it has occupied practically the entire eastern part of the country. The Nationalist Government has been driven out from one important city after another and has withdrawn to the remotest part.

Nevertheless, the resistance continues. The danger is not the power of Japanese Imperialism, which is bound to collapse in the long run; the danger is in possibility of the ruling clique of the Kuo Min Tang and the Nationalist Government again betraying the revolution. That possibility will always remain as long as the leadership of the movement continues to be in the control of reactionaries who by their own acts have proved themselves to be enemies of the revolution. If the zeal for unity precludes the developing of the movement so as to outgrow its reactionary leadership, then, ultimately, the experience of 1927 may be repeated. Political mobilisation as well as arming of the masses under local Communist leadership offer a

guarantee against that danger. But the social composition of the national leadership must eventually change. There is reason to fear that the Communist leaders, behaving like burned children, are inclined towards a relapse into opportunism which may be justified as a clever strategy. It is not enough to recognise that the Chinese revolution is still in the bourgeois democratic stage. It must also be realised that a bourgeois democratic revolution requires a revolutionary leadership. Past experience has amply proved that the bourgeoisie are incapable of leading the revolution. But a bourgeois revolution triumphing in the teeth of the opposition of the bourgeoisie themselves, is not unprecedented in history. The only condition for the triumph is that it must have a revolutionary leadership, in the democratic sense. Communism may be a far cry; but Jacobinism is the order of the day. In order to succeed, the revolutionary movement in China must develop in that direction.

Notes

1. These figures were given by Hang Tsuen in an article in the *International Press Correspondence,* No. 63, July 29, 1930.

2. Report of the Communist Party of China, published in the *Communist International,* Nos. 22/23, June 1929.

3. Report of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, published in the *Communist International,* Nos. 22/23, June 1929.

4. *China Forum,* Shanghai, May 21, 1932 and April 13, 1933.

5. Report to the Seventh Congress of the Communist International.

6. Wang Min, "Revolutionary China To-day", 1933.

7. "Essential Conditions and Minimum Demands for United Resistance", in "The March Towards Unity", published in New York, 1937.

8. Letter to the Members of the All-China National Salvation League, August 10,1936.

9. "China: The March Towards Unity", published in New York, 1937.

10. Edgar Snow, "Red Star Over China".

11. Harry Cannes, "When China Unites", New York, 1937.

12. Edgar Snow, "Red Star Over China".

13. *Shanghai Evening Post,* December 29, 1936.

14. "China To-Day".

15. NymiWales, "The Passing of the Chinese Soviets", *Asia,* New York, January, 1938.

16. Anna Louise Strong, *Asia,* August 1938,

EPILOGUE

The swing of the pendulum of Communist politics in China, indicated by the events in 1937, did lead to a new orgy of opportunism, as was apprehended by critical observers. It degenerated into nationalism. An all-embracing national front against Japanese Imperialism became the new slogan of the Communist Party. The cruel history of ten years' civil war was brushed aside, and Chiang Kai-shek was fervently invited to assume the leadership of the National Front. Thanks to Communist propaganda, the world forgot the bloody record of nationalist China, and hailed Chiang Kai-shek as a great leader of a united people fighting valiantly against Japanese aggression, and subsequently on the side of world democracy in the war against Fascism. To lionise Chiang Kai-shek as one of the top leaders of the international anti-fascist alliance was the greatest absurdity of contemporary history. Even during the war, the politics of the Kuo Min Tang and the behaviour of the Chungking Government were hardly distinguishable from Fascism. The outside world might not know the truth about China. But the Chinese Communists could not plead ignorance. Yet, all along they plumped for an all embracing national front under Chiang Kai-shek's leadership, and English and American journalists of leftist persuasion did a good deal of drum-beating for nationalist China.

Successive military reverses during the earlier part of 1944, and finally the Stilwell episode, created abroad the feeling that there was something wrong in China. The Chinese experts among foreign journalists, again particularly those of leftist persuasion, with an inexplicable suddenness, began to tell "the truth about China". In May 1944, an anonymous correspondent wrote from Chungking: "Many Chinese are becoming aware of a change in British and specially U.S. public opinion about China. For years they were used to hearing nothing but unqualified praise of the Chinese war efforts, in terms which idealised China beyond recognition. I have asked many

Chinese what they thought of the recent change of foreign opinion and of increasing criticism of Government policy. A liberal friend m Government service said: "I am happy that the previous sugary Hollywood conception of China is now giving way to realism. Foreign criticism coincides with the increasing domestic demand for freedom of speech, press and assembly and political organisation and with a growing popular movement in favour of constitutional government.

But the lid was definitely blown off the "cauldron of Cathay" at the end of the year, by Theodore White of the American *Time* and *Life* and Stuart Gelder of the London *News Chronicle;* Brooks *Aikmsono? the New York Times* also contributed to the blow-off. The first two were curious cases of conversion. White paid a short visit to India during the stormy days of August 1942. He was a vehement defender of the congress policy and fully sympathised with the sabotage movement. Apprehensive of certain tendencies at Chungking, he nevertheless supported Chinese nationalism as against Anglo-American Imperialism. Stuart Gelder is more known and loved in India for the role he played as the willing instrument of Gandhi trying to extricate the Congress from the consequences of its pro-Axis politics. The Indian National Congress and the Kuo Min Tang are birds of the same feather. Yet, immediately after breaking a lance for Indian nationalism, Gelder proceeded to China to debunk Kuo Min Tang politics. At the end of December 1944, he reported:

"The facade so carefully built up by the Chinese Propaganda Department and the most accomplished of all Public Relations Directors, Madame Chiang Km-shek, has crumbled in the face of the continuous success of Japanese arms. *t-or* years, the Kuo Min Tang party leaders, who form the one-party government of China, have allowed the rest of the world to think of it as a twentieth century country. To millions of people in Europe, America, India and elsewhere, China has been personified for years in the sophisticated figure of America-educated Madame Chiang Kai-shek. The truth is that she no more represents China than an Indian Maharaja represents India: no more than the commercial cities of Shanghai, Hongkong, Kankow, Tientsin and the cultural centre of Peking represent the four hundred million Chinese who occupy the hmterland of the country and are indeed China."

Having given a graphic picture of the intolerable conditions in nationalist China, and trying to explain them, Gelder further wrote:

"It is an explanation which should have been given by her (China's)propa-gandists, including the most distinguished of all-Madame Chiang Kai-shek— instead of the fantastic bunkum which is now being debunked throughout the

world. Of course, it is largely true that the reason for this is that the present-day rulers of China wish to give the impression that their power is for the good of the Chinese people, and therefore they must paint a pretty picture of the result of it. The interesting time is coming when the Chinese people will discover how they have been sold a fake."

That is a powerful condemnation of nationalism, and an admission of the mistake of having appreciated and supported it as a liberating force even in this period of international civil war. Stuart Gelder and others like him may live to report similarly about the Indian National Congress and its National Government about which they still entertain illusions. This debunking of the Kuo Min Tang and the Chungking Government exposed how very misplaced was the Communist hope of building a united anti-imperialist front again under the tattered and blood-stained banner of nationalism and the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek. The neo-nationalism of the Communists only enabled the Kuo Min Tang to regain its prestige, and Chiang Kai-shek to play the popular hero, and consequently hindered the growth of a revolutionary democratic movement, instead of helping it. Nationalism, which conducted a bloody civil war against the people for a decade, did not change its colour. Its intention was not quite unknown. Stuart Gelder reported at the end of December I 944: "The Kuo Min Tang progressives say that the reactionaries do not want the Communists to be armed, because after the Japs have been beaten, the then well-equipped Kuo Min Tang forces will have a chance to crush them once and for all."

Whether their neo-nationalism was an opportunist deviation or meant to be a tactical move, in the territories controlled by them the Communists finally adopted the policy which should have been theirs long ago. Quietly setting aside the Utopian idea of establishing a proletarian dictatorship in the midst of mediaeval conditions, they raised the banner of revolutionary democracy. The remarkable success of the new policy of the Communists, as evidenced by their ability to mobilise the popular masses in an effective resistance to Japanese aggression, proved that at last, after years of bitter experience, the right approach to the problems of the Chinese revolution had been found. With the programme of revolutionary democratic freedom, the Communists could have directly approached the people throughout the country, instead of advocating a united front with counterrevolutionary nationalism. The adventurous policy of indiscriminate

armed uprising having been discarded in favour of the programme of political mass mobilisation under the banner of democratic freedom Chiang Kai-shek could have no longer continued his military crusade against the Communists. So, they were in a position to appear in the political field as an independent factor, and thus provide a rallying ground for all the democratic and progressive forces in the country. That straight forward policy would have isolated reactionary nationalism, and exposed Chiang Kai-shek and his clique in their true colour and thus made it impossible for them to fool the democratic world for several fateful years.

However, while pursuing the tortuous course of neo-nationalism the Communists, in the territories under their control, did lay the pattern of the Chinese revolution. The revolutionary democratic system established there is bound to extend all over the country in course of time.

In an address to some foreign journalists, who, with great difficulty, obtained the permission of the Chungking Government to visit Yenan at the end of 1944, the leader of the Communist Party Mao Tse-tung, outlined the policy of his party as follows:

"To support Generalissimo Chiang; to insist on cooperation between the Kuo Mm Tang and the Chinese Communists and among the Chinese neoni$_P$ and to struggle for the overthrow of Japanese Imperialism and the establish' ment of an independent democratic China."

In the same address, he deplored the conditions, in the face of which the policy of united front outlined by him was evidently unwarranted and even wrong. He said:

'There is shortcoming in China, and rather serious shortcoming too. This shortcoming is the lack of democracy. The Chinese people urgently need democracy, because it is only through democracy that there can be streLth the war of resistance. What we hope the National Government, the Kuo M « Tang Party and other political parties, will do is to realise democracy in everv way. But China lacks the democratic system that is necessary for puS forward the war. No doubt, we need unification, and there must be umficat on in every way But this must be established on the basis of democracy We need political unification but it cannot be a strong political unification unless* is established on the basis of freedom of speech, press, assembly and orgaSsa tion, and of a government elected democratically by the "

to get over doctrinaire preoccupations and adjust their action to the realities of the country. To shelve the ill-conceived slogan of proletarian dictatorship will improve the position of the Communists even in the European countries. There also, they are now advocating broad-based democratic governments instead of proletarian dictatorship.

Mao Tse-tung's passionate advocacy of democracy is as refreshing as his hope about a regeneration of the Kuo Min Tang is pathetic. To support Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek was obviously inconsistent with the object of establishing "an independent democratic China." For Mao Tse-tung, of all people, to entertain such an illusion about the Kuo Min Tang and Chiang Kai-shek, was indeed curious. He got over one doctrinaire preoccupation, to be captivated by another— united national front. Should the tragic history of China repeat itself? No. Experience will help the Chinese Communists to get over their new doctrinaire preoccupation also.

One of the foreign journalists, who visited Yenan, Issac Epstein, representing the *New York Times,* wrote :

"The administrative systam prevailing in these areas is, unlike in the Kuo Min Tang controlled regions, thoroughly elective and democratic, starting from the lowest village units In some matters, pure democracy prevails in the village, when the whole village population, acting together, discuss and decide a question. The Communist policy in China at present is not to introduce Communism or Socialism, but to mobilise all groups in a democratic alliance for the task of national liberation. Their institutions and actions flow not from mechanical application of formulae, but from detailed study of actual conditions prevailing in China. The communists are not preaching Communism, and the maximum is a reduction of rent in the liberated areas."

Epstein is known to be very close to the Communists. His views expressed publicly might herald a new orientation of the policy of the Chinese Communists. It did, as subsequent events proved.

The all-important economic and social programme of the Chinese Communists was described in January 1945 by the London *Economist* as follows: "The regime at Yenan is not so much Communist as radical agrarian. The guerilla areas too are predominantly agricultural. The new radicalism is apparently not doctrinaire. The Communists have concentrated on reform of rents and taxes, not on expropriation."

That is certainly not Communism, although it is a social revolution—the kind needed by China. Only a Communist Party is not

required to lead such a revolution. More than ninety per cent of the people are directly concerned with the revolution. Therefore, the so-called Communist Party has ceased to be the political organisation of the working class. It no longer pursues the object of setting up a proletarian dictatorship to establish Socialism. It strives for democratic freedom, to be reared upon economic democracy. Consequently, for all practical purposes, in form as well as content, the Communist Party of China has become a party of the people—a Radical Democratic Party.

According to reports published in the beginning of 1945, the Communist Party claims a membership of a million and a quarter. That figure represents a very large fraction of the entire adult population of the area directly under the jurisdiction of the Yenan Government. There are not many thousand industrial workers in that area; nor are there many Communists outside that area.* The class composition of the Communist Party, therefore, is overwhelmingly non-proletarian. Why, then, call it a Communist Party? Experience will most probably compel the leaders of the revolution to discard the inappropriate denomination also. The task of the revolution in colonial and semi-colonial countries now is to establish Radical Democracy. The suitable name for a party leading that revolution is therefore the Radical Democratic Party.

The metamorphosis of the Chinese Communist Party and the change of its programme and policy are influencing the international relation of forces as regards China. The Kuo Min Tang conducted its bloody crusade against the Communists not only with the help of Japan; it had the sympathy and material support of all the imperialist Powers. Even during the war, when the so-called Red Armies were doing as much fighting (often more) as Chiang Kai-shek's armies, the Chungking Government alone received all the benefits of the Lease-Land arrangement. Its anti-Communist policy, which indeed was anti-democratic, was practically condoned by the Anglo-American allies. Towards the end of the war, there was a marked change. The press in Britain and America began urging the Chungking Government to make up with the Communists. Presumably, diplomatic pressure was brought to bear upon Chiang Kai-shek to take some steps in that direction. But the Communists pressed for a full-fledged coalition

* That was nearly a year before the Communist armies, on the defeat of Japan, occupied large tracts of North China and Manchuria.

government, and the end of Kuo Min Tang totalitarianism. Chiang would not agree. The negotiations broke down. Thereupon, the U.S. Ambassador, General Hurley, took a hand. He visited Yenan, and soon afterwards went to Washington to advise, as reliably reported that Chiang Kai-shek should be compelled to make up with the Communists on terms of equality. What he saw in Yenan must have convinced the American Ambassador that the "Reds" are quite respectable people, not engaged in confiscating property and nationalising women, but successfully establishing a democratic order for the first time in the history of China.

The changed policy, particularly of the United States, encouraged the Chinese Communists to stiffen their attitude towards Chungking. The fervent advocacy of an all-embracing national front under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek has been fruitless, as it was bound to be. Communism is a far cry; Radical Democracy is the new way to that distant goal. But civil war is an actuality. The Kuo Min Tang under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek has been waging it ruthlessly ever since 1926 and he intends to carry it on covertly for the moment, and again overtly as soon as the opportunity will come. In that situation, a united national front is an impossibility. Democracy is not identical with nationalism. The neo-nationalist degeneration of the Chinese Communists was not necessary for their taking a realistic view of the tasks of the revolution. Indeed, to establish democratic freedom, they must fight nationalism which, in the present time, is bound to degenerate into Fascism. That happened in China since 1927. Therefore it was so very grotesque to boost the Chinese Fuehrer as a leader of the world anti-fascist front. The same thing will happen in other countries where the antiquated cult of nationalism still dominates public life.

On March 1st, 1945, Chiang Kai-shek made a public announcement that, next November a National Assembly would be called to establish a constitutional government. The Communists had been agitating for this all these years. But now an official spokesman of the Yenan Government struck an entirely different note. In an interview to the Associated Press of America he said: "The National Assembly proposed by Chiang Kai-shek will be a Congress of slaves; Chiang is plotting to swallow the Red Army. He is a despot and a dictator. He should be removed from his high position and punished."

That marked the beginning of a new chapter in the history of the Chinese Revolution. The Communists seem to have realised that a united front under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek will only serve the purpose of counter-revolution. After doctrinaire Communism, reactionary nationalism must also be discarded. The final stages of the long fight for the freedom of the Chinese people will take place under the banner of Radical Democracy -Twentieth Century Jacobinism.

* * *

The collapse of Japan in August 1945 changed the relation of international forces in the Far East, and consequently the perennial civil war in China threatened to break out again in flames of actual fighting. There was a fierce controversy between the Communists and the Chungking Government over the question of accepting Japanese surrender. The Communists claimed that the Japanese armies in the territories covered by the operations of the Chinese Red Army should surrender themselves and their arms to the latter. Chiang Kai-shek, on the contrary, ordered that only officers appointed by him were entitled to accept the surrender of the Japanese army. The object of both the parties was palpable. Chiang wanted to prevent the Communist armies growing stronger by capturing large quantities of arms from the defeated Japanese. The Communists, on their part, were equally anxious to have exactly that advantage. The American Supreme Command backed up Chiang's claim. The Communists were defiant, and the fate of China trembled in the balance.

The Sino-Soviet Treaty, concluded at that juncture, promised to save China from the threatened outbreak of civil war. The Communists would not precipitate a clash without the consent of the Russians, because in that impending clash America stood behind Chungking, and powerful American forces were actually in China. On the other hand, if America intervened in the Chinese civil war the Soviet Union could not stand aloof. Hence the Russians were anxious to head off any such fateful clash. By signing the treaty with the Chungking Government, they went more than half-way—to the extent of letting down the Communists, for the moment at least. But at the same time, in return for sweeping concessions to the Chinese Government, which had never been very friendly to Moscow the Russians demanded democratisation of China and a close Sino-Soviet alliance. The demand implied that Kuo Min Tang Fascism

should end, and Chiang's reactionary clique be removed from power.

The success of Soviet diplomacy would also scuttle the American plan of practically establishing a protectorate over nationalist China. The generous terms offered by the Russians strengthened the hands of the progressive elements inside the Kuo Min Tang. Chiang could openly oppose the treaty only by risking isolation. The treaty thus influenced the relation of forces in the political life of China. According to it, the Chungking Government was to be reconstructed as a coalition of parties, the Communists having a fair representation. Their claim of equal share in the Government was, indeed, waived. But the Communist Party would be a party in the State, on a footing of equality with other parties, including the Kuo Min Tang. Functioning as the leader of Chinese democracy, which would mean its being Communist only in a name, it would grow in influence, and entrench itself throughout the country as deeply as it had done in some limited areas.

But the success of Soviet statesmanship depended on the response from China. The Chungking Government signed as well as ratified the treaty. For the moment, the war clouds on the horizon appeared to disperse. The controversy over the question of Japanese surrender, however, was still not settled. Chiang Kai-shek invited the head of the Yenan Government, Mao Tse-tung, to Chungking for a personal discussion of the controversial questions. Thereupon followed protracted negotiation behind closed doors. It was to settle all outstanding disputes between the two parties, and prepare the ground for the formation of a coalition government. After several weeks, during which time the expectant world was puzzled by conflicting news reports, the negotiation broke up. The Communist leader left the nationalist capital, denouncing Chiang Kai-shek as a fascist dictator. That was the signal for the outbreak of a verbal warfare serving the purpose of a smoke-screen behind which both the parties manoeuvered for positions in the field of civil war. The Coummunists refused to participate in the meeting of the National Assembly which was to promulgate a Constitution as the basis of the coalition government.

The Sino-Soviet Treaty itself was pushed into the background by the new controversy over the question of Russian evacuation of Manchuria. Having realised that moral support given through the treaty did not enable the democratic and progressive elements inside

the Kuo Min Tang to gain the upper-hand, and shake Chiang's dictatorship, the Russians fell back on the policy of assisting the Communists, directly and indirectly, to strengthen their armed forces and take up strategic positions under the cover of the Soviet army, throughout North China and Manchuria. On the other hand, Chiang received the fullest support of the American iniljtary authorities as well as the new Ambassador, General Marshall, in the effort to establish his rule throughout the country, including Manchuria. The result of that parallel development was that the stage was set for a civil war on a much larger scale than ever. By the spring of 1946, China was split up into two openly hostile camps—the Communists controlling strategically the entire North almost down to the Yellow River, and the Nationalists, backed by the Americans, embattled to enforce their authority.

The unhappy country thus made yet another round in the vicious circle of revolution and counter-revolution. Perennial civil war is the feature of that unstable state. It could not be ended simply by the Communists becoming passionate patriots. In the Soviet Union, Communism could be patriotic for the very simple reason that there the people have a *patria;* the country belongs to them. In other countries, where the *patria* is the property of a minority, and the majority is entirely dispossessed, it is absurd to preach patriotism to the people. The Communists have still to learn that the Russians cannot be imitated everywhere, under all circumstances.

The Communists suddenly discovered fascist ambitions in Chiang Kai-shek, having for years lionised him as the leader of the patriotic war. Ihe Nationalists, on their part, accused the Communists of disloyalty and conspiracy to disrupt national unit. The Japanese invitation had forced a semblance of national unity; but it was to be expected that, on the disappearance of that extraneous factor, the smouldering fire of civil war would again break out into flames.

The experience of China should answer one of the outstanding questions facing the post-war world, namely, can democratic freedom be reconciled with Nationalism? The civil war in China has not been, and will not be, a struggle between Communism and Nationalism. It is a tussle between Nationalism and Democracy; between reaction and progress; between vested interests and the urge for a social reconstruction needed for promoting the welfare of the people as a whole. Had Nationalism been democratic, the Communists could

not capture the leadership of the masses. Having learned from experience, the Communists in China to-day are Communists only in name. In effect, they stand for democratic freedom, and have established it wherever they had the power to do so. As champions of democracy in practice, as well as in theory, they have been proclaimed enemies of the nation by the Nationalists. Nationalism thus proposes to wage war against democracy. How can a civil war be avoided in such a situation? Thus, by the middle of 1946, twenty years after the betrayal of the National Democratic Revolution by the nationalist bourgeoisie, and many more decades of a continuous tussle between revolution and counter-revolution, China stood at cross-roads, awaiting the verdict of history.

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